VEXED QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

A SERIES OF ESSAYS

BY

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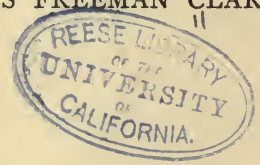

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CONTENTS.

The Five Points of Calvinism and the Five Points of the New Theology.

"And thou shalt make . . . five pillars, and overlay them with gold, . . . and shalt cast five sockets of brass for them."—Exodus xxiv., 37.

The number five has acquired as great significance in theology as it has in nature. The largest family of plants is that of which the flowers have five petals; and the most popular theology of modern times is that of Calvin with its five points of doctrine, which relate to Absolute Decrees, Atonement by Christ for the Elect only, Original Sin, Effectual Calling, and the Perseverance of Saints.

Such have been the main and essential doctrines of Orthodoxy in the past. These doctrines have revolved around the ideas of sin and salvation. The creeds are as remarkable for what they omit as for what they assert. They scarcely allude to those truths which Jesus makes the chief burden of his teaching,—love to God, love to man, forgiveness of enemies, purity of heart and life, faith, hope, peace, resignation, temperance, and goodness. It is certain that the theology of the future will dwell on something else than

the five points of Calvinism, and I have thought it well to consider the counterparts of this ancient system in five points of the coming theology. Let us endeavor to see what they will be.

1. I believe the first point of doctrine in the theology of the future will be the *Fatherhood of God.* The essence of this is the love of the father for his children. Fatherly love is a wise love, a firm love, and a pure love, which seeks the best good of the child. Thus this idea of fatherhood includes that of the holiness, the truthfulness, and the justice of God,—in a word, all the divine attributes. The justice of God as a father is not, as in the old theology, an abstract justice, which has no regard to consequences. God's justice is only another form of mercy. It is the wise law which brings good to the universe, and is a blessing to every creature.

Jesus has everywhere emphasized this truth, that God is a father. We find it pervading the Gospels and coloring all his teaching. We find it already in the Sermon on the Mount, which tells us that we are to let our light shine, not to glorify ourselves, but to glorify our Father in heaven; that we are to love our enemies, that we may be like our heavenly Father, who loves his enemies, and makes his sun rise on the evil and the good. Jesus tells us that, when we pray, we are to pray to our Father, not to infinite power or abstract justice or far-off sovereignty. We are to forgive others, because our Father in heaven forgives us. We are not to be anxious, remembering that our heavenly Father feeds the little birds of the air. We are to pray, confident that our heavenly Father will

give good things to those who ask him. Thus, this idea of God pervades the earliest as it filled the latest teachings of Jesus.

This idea of the divine fatherhood goes down so deep into the human heart that it becomes the source of a childlike obedience, trust, submission, patience, hope, and love. It brings consolation to us in our trials, gives us earnestness in prayer, makes it less difficult to repent when we have done wrong. We look up out of our sin and weakness and sorrow, not to an implacable law, not to an abstract king, but to an infinite and inexhaustible tenderness. Thus, this doctrine is the source of the purest piety.

2. The second point of doctrine in the new theology will be, I think, the *Brotherhood of Man.*

If men are children of the same father, then they are all brethren. If God loves them all, they must all have in them something lovable. If he has brought them here by his providence, they are here for some important end. Therefore, we must call no man common or unclean, look down upon none, despise none, but respect in all that essential goodness which God has put into the soul, and which he means to be at last unfolded into perfection.

As from the idea of the fatherhood of God will come all the pieties, so from that of the brotherhood of man will proceed all the charities. This doctrine is already the source of missions, philanthropies, reforms, and all efforts to seek and save those who are surrounded by evil. It leads men to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to teach the blind, to soothe the madness of delirium, to diffuse knowledge, and carry glad tid-

ings to the poor. And this doctrine, when fully believed, will be the source of purer moralities and nobler charities.

This truth, also, Jesus has taught by his words and his life. He went about doing good, feeding the hungry, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, cleansing the leper, preaching the gospel to the poor. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, of the Roman centurion, the woman of Phœnicia, the woman of Samaria. He was the friend and helper of all who needed him. In the story of the Good Samaritan, he taught that all men are brethren. And his last recorded words were the command to preach the gospel to every creature.

3. The third point of doctrine in the new theology will be, as I think, the *Leadership of Jesus*.

The simplest definition of a Christian is one who follows Christ. This was his own definition: "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me." "I am the way and the truth and the life." "Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden." When Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his words, he said that she had chosen the good part, and had done the one thing needful.

A Platonist is one who studies the teachings of Plato, and takes him for his teacher and guide in philosophy. A Swedenborgian is one who studies the teachings of Swedenborg, and takes him for his guide in theology. A Christian is one who takes Jesus as his guide in religion, and who goes directly to his teachings for religious truth.

But hitherto, instead of considering those as Chris-

tians who have studied the words of Jesus, and sought to know the truth, the name has usually been given to those who accepted some opinion about him. Not what he himself teaches, but what the Church says he teaches, has been made the test of Christian fellowship. Men have been told to go to Jesus, but on the understanding that they shall learn from him only the same thing which the Church has already learned. Instead of sending us to the teacher himself, we are sent to our fellow-students. We, therefore, in reality take them, and not Jesus, for our leader.

The Athanasian Creed asserts as unquestioned verities certain metaphysical statements in regard to the nature of the Deity and the relations which existed between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before the creation. These speculations are read four times a year in the Church of England, and the people are told that those who do not believe these superhuman mysteries shall without doubt perish everlastingly. Is it not evident that the Church, in doing this, takes the unknown author of the creed as its leader and teacher instead of taking Christ himself? All human creeds which are made the tests of what Christ taught are in reality put in his place. Compared with his teaching, they are all narrow and unspiritual. They emphasize some purely intellectual statements which chanced to be popular when they were written. The makers of these creeds tell us to call Jesus teacher, but to learn from themselves what he teaches. They show thus that they dare not trust us to go to him; and they show that they have no real faith in him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Of course there is no harm in a creed, when it merely states what a man believes at the present time or what any number of men believe at any particular period. The harm comes from making the creed a perpetual standard of belief, a test of Christian character, and a condition of Christian fellowship. Such creeds, instead of uniting the Church, have divided it into endless sects and parties. Let men take Jesus himself as their leader and teacher, and the Church will be again one. Then Christians will come into communion not only with the mind, but also with the heart of the Master. When the whole Church is like Mary sitting at the foot of Jesus and hearing his words, it will be more full of his spirit. Bigotry and sectarianism, which have cursed Christianity, will disappear, and be replaced by the large generosity and ample charity of Jesus himself. We shall then, according to his striking Oriental image, eat his flesh and drink his blood. Instead of merely accepting propositions about him, we shall assimilate his character and feed on it in the depths of our heart. Then will be fulfilled his saying: "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me. I know my sheep, and am known of mine."

4. The fourth point of the new theology will be *Salvation by Character.*

Salvation means the highest peace and joy of which the soul is capable. It means heaven here and heaven hereafter. This salvation has been explained as something outside of us,— some outward gift, some outward condition, place, or circumstance. We speak of going to heaven, as if we could be made happy solely by being put in a happy place. But the true heaven, the only

heaven which Jesus knew, is a state of the soul. It is inward goodness. It is Christ found within. It is the love of God in the heart, going out into the life and character. The first words which Jesus spoke indicated this belief. The poor in spirit already possess the kingdom of heaven. The pure in heart already see God. "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He who has the faith which Jesus possessed has eternal life abiding in him. The water that Jesus gives becomes a spring of water within the soul, "springing up into everlasting life." Do not look for a distant heaven, saying, "Lo! here," or "Lo! there"; "for the kingdom of heaven is now with you." When we come to study the words of Jesus as we study human theologies, we shall find that he identifies goodness with heaven, and makes character the essence of salvation. As long as men believe that heaven is something outward, to be attained by an act of profession or belief, they will be apt to postpone such preparation as long as possible. But when we apprehend the inflexible law of consequences, and know that as a man soweth so shall he reap; when we see that spiritual tastes and habits are not to be formed in an hour; and that all formal professions, prayers, and sacraments avail nothing, unless the heart is pure, the soul upright, and the life one of integrity,—then a new motive will be added to increase the goodness of the world. Then the formation of character will be the fruit of Christian faith to an extent never before realized.

5. The fifth point of doctrine in the new theology will, as I believe, be the *Continuity of Human Develop-*

ment in all worlds, or the *Progress of Mankind* onward and upward forever.

Progress is the outward heaven, corresponding to the inward heaven of character. The hope of progress is one of the chief motives to action. Men are contented, no matter how poor their lot, so long as they can hope for something better. And men are discontented, no matter how fortunate their condition, when they have nothing more to look forward to. The greatest sufferer who hopes may have nothing, but he possesses all things: the most prosperous man who is deprived of hope may have all things, but he possesses nothing.

The old theology laid no stress on progress here or progress hereafter. The essential thing was conversion: that moment passed, the object of life was attained. A man converted on his death-bed, after a life of sin, was as well prepared for heaven as he who had led a Christian life during long years. And there was no hint given of farther progress after heaven should be reached. Eternity was to be passed in perpetual thanksgiving or in perpetual enjoyment of the joys of paradise. Such, however, was not the teaching of Jesus. The servant, in the parable, who earned two pounds, was made ruler over two cities: he who earned five pounds had the care of five cities. And the Apostle Paul tells us that one of the things which abide is hope. If hope abides, there is always something to look forward to,—some higher attainment, some larger usefulness, some nearer communion with God. And this accords with all we see and know: with the long processes of geologic development by which the earth

became fitted to be the home of man; with the slow ascent of organized beings from humbler to fuller life; with the progress of society from age to age; with the gradual diffusion of knowledge, advancement of civilization, growth of free institutions, and ever higher conceptions of God and of religious truth. The one fact which is written on nature and human life is the fact of progress, and this must be accepted as the purpose of the Creator.

Some such views as these may constitute the theology of the future. This, at least, we see,— that many of the most important elements in the teaching of Jesus have had no place, or a very inferior place, in the teachings of the Church in past times. As the good Robinson foretold, "more light is to break out from the Word of God." The divine word, revealed in creation, embodied in Christ, immanent in the human soul, is a fuller fountain than has been believed. No creed can exhaust its meaning, no metaphysics can measure its possibility. The teaching of Jesus is not something to be outgrown; for it is not a definite system, but an ever unfolding principle. It is a germ of growth, and therefore has no finality in any of its past forms. "Of its fulness," says John, "we have all received, and grace added to grace." The Apostle Paul regarded his own knowledge of Christianity as imperfect and partial. "We know in part," said he, "and we teach in part." Christianity in the past has always had a childlike faith, which was beautiful and true. But its knowledge has also been that of a child. It has spoken as a child, it has understood as a child, it has thought as a child. This was all well while it was a child. The

innocent prattle of an infant is sweet, but in a youth or man it is an anachronism. Let us have a child-like faith, but a manly intelligence. "In malice be children, but in understanding be men." Let us endeavor to see God and nature face to face, confident that whoever is honestly seeking the truth, though he may err for a time, can never go wholly wrong.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

THE chief passage in which the sin against the Holy Ghost is spoken of is Matt. xii., 31, 32, and is as follows:—

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" (or rather the blasphemy of the Spirit) "shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

The sin here spoken of is commonly called the Unpardonable Sin. The corresponding passage is in Mark iii., 28, 29, and in Luke xii., 10.

There has been much investigation as to the nature of this sin against the Holy Ghost. I think that the majority of Christians have no distinct idea what it means. Many are troubled for fear lest they should ignorantly commit it. Many are rendered miserable, thinking that they have committed it. Some people suppose that it is possible to commit this sin ignorantly, and almost accidentally. Some think that it is an exceptional and peculiar sin, having no parallel, be-

longing to no class, standing quite alone. It is thought not possible to explain its nature or give a reason for its fatal penalty: hence, it is made an arbitrary act of God. God is thought to have made this sin worse than others in its nature and penalty for good reasons of his own, of which we can know nothing. Now, all this partakes of the nature of superstition, and therefore is injurious. Superstitious fears do us no good, — only harm. The only fear which does us good is rational fear. Midnight, ghostly, spectral fears do no one any good. It is the mid-day fear of what we see, and comprehend to be evil, which helps us, and no other kind of fear. Let us see, then, if we can throw a little of the daylight of reason and common sense on this subject.

First, then, as to the opinion that this is a sin which may be committed ignorantly and accidentally.

If any one should leave a deep but concealed hole in a place where people were walking to and fro, so that, without knowing it, they might suddenly fall in, and be killed, we should think him a bad man. We should say, "If he cannot cover up the hole, he can at least put a distinct mark over it, so that all may know where it is, and be able to avoid it." But what shall we say of those who think that God has left a concealed place, through which men may fall, in a moment, not into temporal, but eternal death? It is a dreadful thing to believe concerning the Almighty Father. I, for one, can never believe it.

It may be that the meaning is simpler than we suppose, and that there may be a significance which we can comprehend and make use of. The best way to

understand it is to read the whole passage, and find when it was said and why it was said.

It was said to the Pharisees; and it was said to them because they attributed the good works of Christ to an evil power. He healed a man who was both blind and dumb. They said, "He casts out devils by Beelzebub, prince of the devils." Jesus said that this was not blasphemy against *him*, but against *the Spirit of God.* Why so? The Holy Spirit had not been mentioned. The Pharisees had said nothing about the Holy Spirit, but they had attributed his good actions to an evil power. How did that blaspheme the Holy Spirit? The blasphemy was not in words, but in the meaning of their words. It is the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God within us, which teaches us what goodness is. Now, in denying that the action of Jesus had a good source, they denied, virtually, that it was a good action; for the devil does not do good actions: if he did, he would not be the devil. Good actions must come from God, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. We must either make the tree good and the fruit good, or else we must make the tree corrupt and the fruit corrupt. Therefore, in saying that Christ cast out demons by Beelzebub, they said that casting out demons was not a good, but a bad action. Now, they knew better than that. God's spirit in their heart taught them that to cast out demons was not a bad action, but a good one. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, consisted, therefore, in denying that goodness was good. For the sake of putting down Jesus, they contradicted the most fundamental convictions of their own souls.

Accordingly, to say that a thing comes of evil, which our moral instincts and spiritual intuitions teach us to be good, is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

There are certain fundamental moral convictions, which God bestows upon us, which are the foundations of all other convictions. These are primitive, all others are derivative: these are certain, other things probable. Doubt or deny these, and the whole fabric of knowledge, faith, belief, opinion, totters. If you are not sure of your intuitions, you are uncertain of everything. But this is not the worst; for not only does all knowledge, but also all goodness, rest on this foundation. Deny your moral convictions, and there is no right or wrong, no good or evil, no duty, no God.

Since these fundamental convictions are so important, God has rooted them in the soul, so that we cannot escape from them: they are there when we deny their existence. We cannot believe that goodness is not good; but we can say that it is not good, and to speak thus against our own highest convictions is to blaspheme the Holy Ghost. This is just what the Pharisees did, and this is the essence of the unpardonable blasphemy.

Some commentators have narrowed down the meaning of the sin, in order to show that we are not in much danger of committing it now. To relieve anxious minds, they say that it is only doing what the Pharisees did at that time; namely, ascribing Christ's miraculous acts of healing to the devil: so, as no one nowadays does this, no one now is in danger of committing this sin. This explanation will, no doubt, relieve the anxious minds who believe it, but at the expense of re-

ducing the doctrine to a nullity. It also leaves an unreasonable character attaching to the words of Jesus, and does not explain his purpose in such a declaration.

The sin against the Holy Ghost is, in our opinion, not a single outward action, but conduct and words proceeding from a fixed inward state. It is a determination of the mind not to receive what is seen to be truth, and not to accept what is known to be good, because this truth and this goodness conflict with its own prejudices, interests, or desires. It is the mind hardening itself against goodness, sophisticating itself against right. It is essentially a state of mind.

Nor is this sin, therefore, an unconscious act, done ignorantly. Men sometimes fear that they may ignorantly, and without knowing it, have committed the unpardonable sin; but this is not possible. Whatever we do ignorantly and unconsciously may be pardoned. "I obtained mercy," says the apostle, "because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief." "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." No one need ever fear that he has committed an unpardonable sin without knowing it.

Nor is this an isolated and exceptional doctrine, standing alone, and unconnected with the other teachings of Jesus. This is the only place that it is called by this name as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but the same doctrine is implied everywhere else. The whole gospel of Christ, in all its teachings, is based upon the idea that man can be helped by God and by his brother-man out of all evil states but one. So long as he does not wilfully resist God's truth and love, he can be forgiven and sanctified: but he cannot be for-

given against his will; he cannot be saved against his will; he cannot go to heaven against his will. This state of mind, whether it shows itself in blasphemy against the Spirit of Goodness, in a heart hardened against right, a conscience seared as with a hot iron, or in acts of resistance to the cause of right, is always the same.

Thus far, we have reasoned from the context, from the words of Scripture here: now let us reason from the analogy of faith. Scripture is a unit. At all events, the gospel is a unit: it cannot contradict itself. The doctrine, therefore, which is taught obscurely here, is, I believe, taught very plainly elsewhere.

The danger of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost is the great penalty of abused freedom. God has determined that man shall be free. He has not made man for simple happiness,— for such enjoyment as he gives to the fish in water or the bird in air: he has made him for the higher happiness which comes from goodness. He shall not be happy at all, he shall be gnawed inwardly by a divine unrest, he shall be inwardly dissatisfied, till he can be satisfied through truth and right. Nor does God intend that he shall become good till he can become so freely. There was a Holy of Holies in the Jewish temple, into which no one went but the high priest, and he only once a year. In the centre of the human soul there is a Holy of Holies,— the sacred seat of personality, the private place of human freedom, which only the individual himself can enter. The key of that door God has given to him alone. Even God will not enter it

against his will. He can shut out God and man, he can shut out truth and goodness. That he may be wholly free, the power is given him of believing falsehood and loving evil. From that centre of the soul, everything which proceeds is free. If goodness comes from it, it is the man's own; if evil, that is also his own. But the great power carries with it a great danger. If we retire into the citadel of our soul when we are resisting truth, no power, divine or human, can follow us in to change us or to help us.

This, then, it is to sin against the Holy Ghost. It is to shut out truth, to resist good, to harden the conscience against the Spirit of God; and the punishment is what the Saviour announces: "This is the condemnation" (or "damnation"; for it is the same word which is elsewhere translated "damnation" or "judgment"),— "this is the damnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." The punishment for resisting light is that we remain in darkness: that is punishment enough. Eternal damnation, or spiritual damnation, as opposed to temporal damnation, is absence from the truth and love of God: it is the absence from God's presence. He who shuts out God is away from God,— that is all; but that is enough. And as forgiveness means, in the New Testament, God coming into the soul with a sense of his love, those who shut him out cannot be forgiven, because he will not enter their soul against their will.

We may now see what is meant when it is said that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in this world or that which is to come. It means that, in this and in every other world, God will leave us

free,— free to accept, free to resist, his truth and his goodness. When we knowingly and wilfully resist goodness, he allows us to do so, and to take the consequences.

"In this world or in that which is to come." The literal meaning here is, "*in this present age and in the coming age*"; *i.e.*, of the Messiah. The present age was the age of the Law: the coming age would be the age of the Gospel. Now, the people thought, and thought truly, that, in the age of the Messiah, many sins would be forgiven which were not forgiven then. The coming of Christ was to be a new coming of God's forgiving love,— "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." The prophets foretold that, in the time of the Messiah, God would forgive their sins. "In those days, saith the Lord, I will forgive your iniquity, and I will remember your sin no more." The law of Moses said, "*Do* this, and thou shalt live": Christ said, "*Believe* in God's forgiveness, and be forgiven." The domain of forgiveness is, therefore, much wider under the Gospel than it was under the Law. There is no parable of the Prodigal Son in the Old Testament. Neither Moses nor Elijah ever said, "Be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee." God is always the same; but his revelations are different and progressive. Christ revealed the forgiving love of God as it had not been revealed before; and he revealed it not by word only, but by action. He communicated forgiveness: he had power on earth to forgive sin.

But there was one sin which even he could not forgive; and that was the sin of a heart deliberately shutting itself up, in its citadel of freedom, against God's

revelation of love. Not in this age nor in the age to come — not in any age, any place, any time — can this sin be forgiven. The conditions of forgiveness are wanting,—humility, penitence, a desire to be forgiven.

For again we ask, What is forgiveness? We know what is meant by human forgiveness. Man forgives when he ceases to be angry, and ceases to punish. But God cannot forgive in either of these ways: he can neither cease to be angry, nor cease to punish. He cannot cease to be angry, for he never is angry as man is angry. His anger is infinite indignation against sin, joined to an infinite pity for the sinner: he can never cease from either. Nor can God cease to punish sin as long as sin continues; for his punishments are blessings: they are what we need; they are for our good; they are the established consequences of faults; they come by laws which can never be broken. To suffer while we sin is the best thing which can befall us. God, therefore, never forgives by remitting penalty. How, then, does he forgive?

God's forgiveness is reaching out and finding the sinner, and drawing him to himself. It is loving us while we sin, and making us feel his love. It is removing the alienation which sin always causes; for, whenever we do wrong, we turn away from God. It is God's love, coming to find us, and to reconcile us to himself, which constitutes forgiveness. God does not forgive us because we have repented, but to lead us to repentance. We must, indeed, have the beginnings of repentance, the sense of the evil of our sin; the feeling of emptiness and want while away from God; and a sincere desire for goodness. Then he comes,

reconciling us to himself. He sends some sweet influence into the soul; he draws our heart toward him; he awakens the conviction of his nearness; he brings a sense of reunion; he enables us again to say, "My Father!" This is God's forgiveness, and it is what Christ came to reveal and to impart.

All manner of sin and blasphemy, therefore, Christ could forgive. He could forgive the thief on the cross, the woman taken in adultery, the other sinner who brought her box of ointment, Peter who denied him thrice, Pilate who condemned him, the soldiers who crucified him, Paul who persecuted him. He could forgive these; for he saw in them all either penitence, capacity for penitence, honest error, or ignorant unbelief. But, in the heart of the Pharisees, he saw neither humility nor ignorance, but a determined purpose not to submit to the truth; and he *could not* forgive them: *they* had made it impossible.

"Whoever shall blaspheme the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." The Apostle Paul was a remarkable instance of this. He had blasphemed the Son of man; he had persecuted and abused those who believed in him. "And yet," said he, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief"; and he obtained mercy, not after he had repented, but in the very act of going on with his persecutions. Christ saw in his heart an ignorant honesty, capable of becoming penitence when more light should come. It was not his repentance which led to his being forgiven, but he was forgiven that he might repent. "The goodness of God leads us to repentance," said he afterward. And so, ever since, it has happened

that infidels and deists have been converted in the midst of their blasphemies, and changed into friends of Christ: their hearts were not so bad as their heads.

When, therefore, men commit sin from ignorance or from passion, God's mercy may come to them at any time to humble them and to bring them to repentance; but those who harden their heart against the truth make themselves incapable of this divine mercy, and, as we read in the parallel passage, "are in danger of eternal damnation."

What is this eternal damnation? According to the common idea, it is an everlasting outward hell, from which one cannot escape. The word, however, signifies simply "judgment," as it is translated in almost every instance; or, as we have seen above, it may mean "condemnation," as it is translated in John: "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world; but that men chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

According to this text, the damnation, or judgment, of those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost is in the fact that they choose darkness rather than light. So, likewise, we are told of those who shall go away into outer darkness. They choose to go away from Christ, and therefore go into darkness, loneliness, and spiritual death. They are not driven: they go.

Does this passage teach the common doctrine of everlasting punishment in the future life for sins committed in the present world? Olshausen is inclined to think that it does; though he says, "The statement that there is one sin which cannot be forgiven in the world to come allows us to conclude that all other sins

can be forgiven in the world to come." But, according to the explanation just given, though it teaches eternal punishment (like the whole of the New Testament), it does not teach that this is the same as never-ending punishment. Eternal punishment is the punishment of eternity, as distinguished from the punishments of time. It comes from within, and not from without; from the sight of eternal truth, and not from temporal changes.

Close observers of the language of the New Testament must have noticed this phrase, "are *in danger* of eternal damnation." How *in danger* of it? We should say, according to common orthodox ideas, that those who could not be forgiven in this world or that which is to come were not only "in danger" of eternal damnation, but were at least certain of it, if not already damned. Poor Cowper believed himself eternally damned already for having sinned against the Holy Ghost. But Christ does not say this: he says they are "*in danger* of eternal damnation."

The explanation is that this sin is not a single act, but a state of mind, having degrees. We *gradually* harden ourselves against any truth, and are in danger of hardening ourselves so completely that it will become impossible for us to see it. We at last find ourselves in a condition in which the soul is wholly directed to something foreign from God and his will. God is totally shut out, and we are contented and self-satisfied in being away from him. This is eternal or spiritual death, as distinguished from all temporal loss, pain, and evil.

Now, when one has reached this point, and has shut

God out by hardening the heart against his truth, what remains for him? Nothing but to go on, and to see his evil out; to carry it out to its last results, and so by the road, not of forgiveness, but of utter evil, to reach good and truth again. When, how, where, no one can say; for no one can sound the mysteries of free will. When one has wholly set his will to oppose truth, how far and how long he may go in that direction no one can say. He must go through with it, and see it to the end.

We said above that God could not forgive by remitting the natural consequences of evil, for this natural penalty is what is best for the offender himself. Perhaps we went too far in saying this. God may sometimes forgive, even in this sense, those who have not committed the unpardonable sin. The natural consequence of opposing Christ is to be without Christ; but, in the case of Paul, God remitted this penalty, and brought him to know and love Jesus by a special act of mercy. He often forgives us all in like ways, and remits by special favor the natural penalties of our sins. The natural consequence of selfishness is not to be loved; but how many selfish persons are forgiven the full measure of this penalty, and continue to be loved by affectionate wives and children! Therefore, it is true, even in this sense, that all manner of sins and offences may be forgiven, except this one of hardening the heart against the truth by a wilful resistance.

Those who are most likely to commit the unpardonable sin are not atheists, deists, heretics, profane persons, Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, thieves, but, on

the other hand, bigots and sectarians, who think themselves the only orthodox and religious characters extant.

Nothing hardens the heart so much against the Holy Spirit as dogmatic or ecclesiastic bigotry. There are those to whom goodness is not good, if out of their own sect; to whom love and generosity go for nothing in a heathen or a heretic; who call the most noble virtues "mere morality," if not attended by the technical tests of conversion received in their own puny party. The better a man is, the worse he is in their esteem, if he denies their creed. When they see the demons of pride, lust, selfishness, cast out of the soul by the power of conscience, charity, purity, and faith, they say, virtually, that this is done by the power of Satan. We have even heard it stated in terms by a champion of Orthodoxy that heretics are apt to be better men than the orthodox, because the devil uses their goodness as a bait to allure men into their heresies. This, and the like declarations, come as near to the precise sin against the Holy Ghost, which Jesus rebuked, as can well be.

I once had this conversation with a young lady, who had recently joined the Catholic Church: —

"You say that out of the Church there is no salvation. What do you do, then, with all the good Protestants you have known, — your own father and mother, for example, — or Dr. Channing and Henry Ware, and such persons?"

"Oh! we allow for those who are in invincible ignorance. They, though out of the Church, may yet be saved."

"True; but such men as I have named had ample opportunity to investigate the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, and yet rejected it. They were not in any invincible ignorance. They, therefore, must be damned, must they not?"

"I admit it: they must."

"Then God damns good people, does he?"

"But the goodness of those not in the Church only seems to be goodness. It is not really goodness, unless it comes from the true Church."

"Very well. This is the point to which I wished to bring you. We cannot know goodness when we see it: that is the logical result of your Catholic doctrine. This is striking at the foundation of all faith. We believe in God as the infinitely good Being; but we must know goodness first, in order to believe that God is good. We believe in Christ because of the goodness of his life, his word, his works, his gospel; but we must know goodness first, in order to believe that Christ and his religion are good. But, according to your Catholic principle, we cannot tell goodness when we see it. Consequently, we cannot have any ground for belief in God or Christ; still less, therefore, in the Church founded by Christ: so that your principle legitimates atheism and deism, and overthrows your own Church into the bargain."

Most Churches reverse this teaching of Jesus, and teach the precise opposite. Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit may be forgiven, but not those who say a word against the Son. They see all generous and noble actions done; and, because not done by the "evangelical" sects, they deny them to be the work

of God. The goodness of heretics, of the heathen, of deists, of atheists, has nothing divine in it to them: it is a mere trick of the devil to deceive souls. People may thus reject and blaspheme the Holy Spirit, and it will be forgiven them; but, if they deny the deity or atonement of Christ, it cannot be forgiven them. So the Church curses him whom Christ has blessed, and absolves him whom Christ has condemned.

The result of this investigation, then, has brought us to these results: —

1. The sin against the Holy Ghost is denying the divine character of goodness, and resisting the power of truth and love, in order to maintain some private conviction, purpose, or prejudice. It is simply resisting good by the force of the will.

2. This sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, is not a singular or exceptional act, but is frequent and very common in all men, but especially common among the religious, and in those who lay the greatest stress on their having the true faith or the true Church.

3. It is a sin which cannot be forgiven, because it closes the mind against the very truth which would bring repentance and make forgiveness possible.

4. It is a sin, therefore, which must be expiated by suffering, and which can only find its solution by being carried out to its last result, producing its full fruits, and showing itself so conclusively to be evil as to make further persistence in it at last impossible.

5. Finally, there are these two classes of sins,— venial and unpardonable. The first are committed by those who love truth and goodness, but fail through ignorance, weakness, force of habit, bad example, etc.

The second are wilful sins,— sins committed against the truth. The first may be *pardoned;* that is, their evil consequences removed by the mercy of God. The second must be expiated; that is, their evil consequences must be borne, even to the end. Of these, it may be said, "Verily, thou shalt not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

CHRIST AND HIS ANTICHRISTS.*

THE subject, brethren, of my address to you at this time is one which concerns us all as Christian preachers and as Alumni of a Liberal School of Theology. It is "The Coming of Christ and of his Antichrists"; or, to put it into less Biblical phrase, "Christianity, and its Substitutes in Human History."

Is there any one of us who has not attempted to enter into the mind of Christ, and to understand his thoughts, feelings, and purposes in relation to his mission? From the hints and suggestions of the Gospels, have we not endeavored to construct some consistent image of Jesus, the Son of man,—penetrating into his thought and heart? Here is my picture, as I see him across all these centuries. There are two or three windows through which I look into his mind: one is the History of the Temptation; another, his Quotations from the Old Testament; a third, his Parables concerning the Kingdom of Heaven; a fourth, what he says concerning his Future Coming.

During those thirty years of which we have scarcely a record, I seem to see him receiving inward illumination, and becoming acquainted with the realities of the spiritual world and the laws of the divine government.

*An address to the Alumni of the Divinity School, Cambridge, July, 1861.

Above all men, in him was active the intuitive faculty by which we look from earth into heaven. Of those thirty years, we have only this information,—that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." His wisdom and goodness were, like those of other men, a growth. So far, it was natural. How far it was also supernatural, I do not now inquire. In my judgment, it was both natural and supernatural, —natural in being strictly, purely, absolutely human; supernatural in being divinely ordered, providentially guarded, celestially inspired and helped, all the way through.

But Divine Providence, in selecting him to be the central figure of the human race and its future leader, had arranged the conditions. Born of the great Semitic family, from which all the religions with a catholic tendency have emanated, a mysterious Providence prepared the fine organization which was to be the servant and medium of this wonderful soul. His education was from nature, inspiration, and the historic records of his people. Gradually there developed in him the power of seeing with the spiritual eye as accurately as other men see with the bodily eye: so that, when he came to speak of the laws of God and the facts of heaven, there was no hesitation, haze, or obscurity in his description: all was definite outline. He therefore spoke with authority,—the authority of perfect insight. He saw that God was One; that he was Spirit; that he was Truth and Love; that he was Love, because he was the Universal Father, loving all his children alike,—loving the good and the evil: longing to pardon; inviting the sinner to repent and

return; hearing prayer; giving his Holy Spirit to those who asked it. He saw that he was also Truth; that he was holy; that he acted by law; that he maintained the great moral order of the universe; that his laws were unchanging and eternal, because part of his own being.

The perfect insight of Jesus, therefore, concerning God, brought him to this knowledge,— that God is both Nature, or Law, and Freedom, or Love; that he is Spirit, or Perfect Freedom, but that this freedom acts according to an order of laws, and for the perfect good of creation,— that is, God is Spirit acting from Love, through Truth, for Good.

Concerning individual souls, Jesus saw that every soul was at once limited by circumstance, and free by will and knowledge; and that the destiny appointed to each soul, in its own order of development, is to rise to God by knowledge, obedience, and love. The limitations to this ascent he states to be twofold,— the divine order, or providential conditions of time and place; and the freedom to accept or to refuse good, belonging to the individual.

If, now, you ask me how I know that Jesus beheld all this so clearly, I reply, first, that I *see* it in the pages of the Gospels. I am obliged to say, "Never man spake like this man." The parables and the Sermon on the Mount, the deeds and words of Jesus, give the inevitable inference of one *sure of himself*, — one who has no doubt or hesitation, who sees every fact and law with perfect distinctness. This is one of the strongest proofs of the truth thus seen and reported. If a teacher of astronomy comes to me, or a teacher of botany, who is *at home* in his science, with

every fact and law familiar, able to explain to me the whole, I do not need external proof that he knows it. The knowledge is its own proof. So of Jesus.

But this evidence is made conclusive, because the truths thus seen by Jesus have been verified by the experience of mankind. So far as the moral law which he taught has been put in practice, it has approved itself as in accord with the order of the universe.

This, then, was the gospel, or good news, which Jesus saw and declared concerning the individual soul. But religion concerns not only the development of the individual soul through eternity, but the progress of the human race on earth in time. God's kingdom was to come also to man on earth; and Jesus had not only a gospel for the individual, but also one for the race. He believed that God was educating the race providentially in history. In the records of his nation, this providential education was made clear; and, in these records, he beheld prophetic visions of a much grander figure,— the reign of a Messiah. Comparing these prophetic suggestions with the intuitions of his own soul, he perceived that his own insight completely fulfilled their foresight; that all the lines of their thought converged to himself. What an awful moment, when to him it was shown that, of all human beings, he alone understood the purposes of God, and that he was, therefore, the agent to fulfil them! It is said that when Newton, by a long series of calculations on the lunar motions, was testing the truth of his hypothesis of universal gravitation, and, as the calculation drew to its close, perceived that the hypothesis was

about to be verified, he stopped, overwhelmed and awed at the dawning of this great truth to the world. But how much more vast the revelation which must have come to Jesus, when he saw that he was to be the Way to God, the Truth to the world, the Life to the soul; that he was really that Messiah who was to introduce peace between man and God, peace between man and man; by whom men were to come to their Father; who was to unite all races and religions in one, and to change a legal obedience of duty into a willing and grateful love; through whom God's kingdom was to come, and his will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven!

Having realized this, the next step in the experience of Jesus was to find out the appointed means; and, on this part of his experience, the story of the temptation throws great light. His perfectly lucid intellect saw all the obstacles in the way of his work. He knew what was in man, and perceived the resistance to come from priest and people, from obstinate custom, from self-interest, from pride, from habits of thought, from superstition, from bigotry, from worldliness, from sensuality, from hardness of heart. Yet he knew that he possessed power sufficient to overcome this resistance. The mysterious gifts of his nature, if directed to that end, would be enough to bring all men to his feet; and then he could do with them as he chose. One concession, one compromise, one moment given to expediency, and, after that, all might belong to God. The stones would become bread; angels would bear him up in their hands; all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, would be his. That was the temptation.

The temptation was to use worldly means for a holy end,—the temptation to which so many noble souls have yielded, from Mohammed and Hildebrand to the great statesmen who have sold their eternal birthright of truth for the pottage of temporal expediency. The temptation was to obtain a strong outward position, to build up an imposing visible kingdom, to draw together by all motives the parties in the Jewish State, and then to use this power for the conversion of the world to God.

We know how Jesus passed through this terrible trial, and how he came out of the furnace with no smell of fire on his garments. Simple truth and love were to be his only means. But, when he had thus decided, he perceived that he was not to behold, in this life, the coming of his kingdom. It was probable that he would be put to death, that all would seem to be lost. Then he rose into a contemplation of the vast future, and spoke of himself as coming to reign as the Christ in distant centuries. Of the day and hour of his coming, not he nor any finite mind could know; but he was to come. The Son of man, the historic Jesus, was to come as the ideal Christ, the Son of God. His divine truth was to conquer at last, his peace was to prevail over war, his love over selfishness. All races and religions were to become one in him; evil was to be overcome by good. He was to come in the clouds of heaven; that is, according to Oriental speech, in the changing opinions and advancing spirit of men: not here or there, not in one place or another place, but everywhere at once, like the leaven which leavens the lump, like the lightning which lightens all round the

sky at the same moment. Thus did he set aside the idea of locality and visibility in his coming.

In this perfect faith he departed. After the last agonizing struggle, in which he inquired of God if there could not even yet be some way by which he could now establish his kingdom, and found there was none, he said, "Thy will be done," and departed.

Then came the resurrection, which was not merely coming back to earth, but going upward and onward into a higher state, from whence he could commune more intimately and livingly with the souls of his disciples than when he was with them; and so, having filled their souls full of his truth and love, he passed away outwardly, to become more and more present inwardly to the conscience and heart of the world with each advancing century of human history.

Turn now from the Christ to the antichrists.

While speaking of his future spiritual and ideal coming, Jesus gave this warning to his disciples and to the whole church: "Take heed lest any man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. . . . Then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not: for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Wherefore, if they say to you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers,—believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Who are these antichrists of history? Are they

only individuals,— poor, passing impostors of the hour, —or are they not rather ideas, principles, institutions, rising up in the Church, antagonizing the spirit and power of the gospel? So I esteem them. The antichrists are not the sin of the world, nor its unbelief; they are not infidelity nor worldliness: but they are principles and systems in the Church, pretending to be Christ. Sin does not pretend to be Christ, nor does infidelity pretend to be Christ; but these principles do. They say, "We are Christ"; and they "deceive many." They have come up, one after another, in the Church, demanding the obedience, belief, and assent of men, on peril of damnation if refused. According to the true gospel, the soul is safe when it is filled with the spiritual Christ,— the Christ formed within,— the love and truth of God; but these antichrists demand allegiance to themselves.

The Church the First Antichrist.

The first antichrist which appeared was THE CHURCH. The Church has often come in the name of Jesus, and said, "I *am Christ*," and has deceived many. The Papal Church has claimed to be the only way to God, has declared that out of her there was no salvation, has made her sacraments essential media of religious life; and so she took the place of Christ as mediator between man and God. Christ said, "I am the door"; but the Church responded, "I am the door." Christ says, "If any man believe in *me*, he has eternal life abiding in him." The Church declared that no one had any right to believe in Christ, unless he

believed in her as Christ's visible body. The Church has declared herself to be the door, the true shepherd, the way of salvation, the truth, and the life. In making these claims, she has made herself antichrist. She has come in her Master's name, saying, "I am Christ." She has localized Christ, saying, "Lo, here is Christ; and, lo, there." The very power she has shown, and the astonishing phenomena she has developed out of her corporate zeal, have completed the picture; for thus she has shown great signs and wonders, so as, if it were possible, to deceive the very elect. She has asserted Christ to be in her secret chambers, in the Vatican; to be in her monasteries, in the desert. According to the gospel, all believers are priests, and holy; but she has established a distinction between the priests and people, making the one sacred and the other secular. Christ says to his disciples, "Call no man master, and no man father on earth; for one is your Master and Father in heaven, and ye are brethren"; and the Church calls the Pope Master and Father, and requires submission to him instead of submission to Christ. Christ says, "When ye pray, use no vain repetitions"; but she advises her children to repeat the Paternoster fifteen times, and the Ave Maria a hundred and fifty to each rosary.

Now, I recognize the goodness there is in the Roman Catholic Church; and I see that Roman Catholics are, in some things, better than Protestants. But *the Church itself*, with its immense pretensions, whenever it claims to be the mediator between man and God, thereby makes itself antichrist. It takes our faith and obedience from Christ, and transfers it to itself. But the

same principle is antichrist in Protestant Churches. When any Church makes its rites and forms essential, — its ceremonies, its books, its creed, its holy days, its holy persons, its holy times, essential,— it becomes thereby an antichrist. When Episcopacy claims that no one is a minister who has not been touched by a bishop, and that no child is safe who has not been baptized with water, it brings these forms between the soul and Christ. To make anything essential but faith in the Divine Truth and Love is to be an antichrist.

The principle of authority in a Church and its rites is hostile to the spirit of the gospel and to the spirit of Jesus himself. He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, yet never was reformer so radical as he, since the destructive reformer is less radical than the creative, positive, constructive one. Life, advancing life, which forgets the things behind,— not stopping to quarrel with them, advancing to those before,— is the most radical reform of all. The inflowing life of nature, which takes up into itself the ruins of the old year, is the type of this most radical reform.

So wholly positive and creative was the work of Christ that it is difficult for us to regard him separately as a reformer. If we could, we should see that there was never so bold or thorough an assault on the body and form of religion; never anything which so completely cleared the ground of the past, and yet without cutting away from behind one connecting line of true historic life. He took into himself Moses, the prophets, the Jewish ideal of the Messiah,— the sub-

stance and essence of them all,—and then dropped and let go the form. To be sure that we have the kernel of a theory, this alone gives us courage to cast away the shell.

The difficulty of the Protestant Church is just here: it has not extracted the whole kernel of Romanism; and, therefore, it is afraid to throw away the shell. We have not yet learned the whole secret of Romanism: when we have, we shall be able to leave behind all its forms; we shall have no mitigated Romanism in the form of episcopal apostolic succession, no simulated sacraments, no rags of Papacy. "The ghost of a linen decency still haunts us," says John Milton. Such wise and good writers as Miss Yonge and Miss Sewell, who describe nature and life with the insight of masculine English intellect, talk baby-talk about baptism and confirmation. It seems, in fact, a peculiarity of the English mind, with occasional magnificent exceptions, to be unable to go back of the accepted statement, precedent, or tradition of its own Church. "There be," says Milton, in a passage often quoted, but which I must quote once more,—"there be—who knows not that there be?—of Protestants and professors who live and die in as errant and implicit faith as any lay Papist of Loretto. A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and his profits, finds religion to be too entangled a traffic for him: so he finds out some divine of note, to whom he adheres, and resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all its locks and keys, and, indeed, makes the very person of the man his religion; so that his religion is no more within himself, but comes and goes near him as that good man fre-

quents his house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him: his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted; and after the Malmsey, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion." I do not think we have as yet wholly outgrown this description.

But not merely the Episcopal Church relapses thus toward the theory of Rome: in all our churches there is a tendency to exalt the forms. The duties most considered are church duties: the sins most feared are offences against church rules. To take a walk on Sunday afternoon is in many places held a sin; to go to the theatre, another; and, had the father of the prodigal son belonged to some old-school churches, he would have been disciplined for having music and dancing in his house when his lost son was found.

When one of our Southern Presidents was on his death-bed, it occurred to him that he had never paid due attention to religion. He therefore proposed to himself to make his peace with God. In what form did that work come before him? Was it to repent of the evil done, when he precipitated the nation into a war with Mexico? By no means: that had nothing to do with *religion*. No: the question which agitated his mind in that serious hour was how to be baptized, and whether by a Methodist or by a Presbyterian minister. The important question was at last decided. The duty he had been taught to believe so essential

was performed, and he died in peace. Better, as it seems to me, was the course of an eminent statesman, who, on his death-bed, declined the offices of the ministry and the Church, saying that it was too late to think of those things then, and with his dying lips commanded his sons to support the Constitution, the Union, and the Laws. *That* religion, the religion of patriotism, he at any rate possessed; and to that he meant to be true, and not to speak any "words of wind" in his dying hour.

When Paul taught the great doctrine of justification by faith, he laid the axe at the root of this tree of church salvation,— of relying on *any* forms as essential to the life of the soul. Luther, in his single-handed conflict with the colossal power of Rome, was obliged to assert again and vitalize once more in human consciousness this magnificent principle; and, in its strength, he conquered. He dealt a blow to the antichrist of Form. It lies half dead to-day: before long, it will be quite dead. Yet

> . . . "cinis ipse sepulti
> In genus hoc sævit, tumulo quoque sensimus hostem."

The first antichrist developed in the Church of Christ was, as we have seen, the Church itself, resolved into ceremony, ritual, form. The body of Christ, which consists of faithful men and women united around him, filled with his truth and love, doing his work, was degraded to a mere external worship. The minister (or servant) was changed into a priest. The worship of spirit and truth, for which the Father seeks, became a worship of time, place, person, ritual

The next great antichrist which arose in the Church was the Dogma, claiming to be Christ, coming in his name, and saying, "I am he." The dogma which asks for faith in itself, instead of asking for faith in Christ, becomes an antichrist. Every great doctrine of the Church, no doubt, at first represented a vital truth. The Deity of Christ meant, at first, simply this: that those who see Christ see not him, but his Father,—looking through him to God; that God's truth and God's love are fully incarnate in him. So of Total Depravity and the Atonement: all meant something real. They were, at first, insights of the soul. These insights were put into formal statements, and so made into doctrines; and then men were asked to accept them. As inspirations, they had led the soul to God: and it was supposed that, as dogmas, they would do the same. "This is Christianity," said the dogmatist. "Here is Christ, in this creed of ours. Only assent to it, and it will work like a charm. It will save your soul." So, at last, it was not expected of men to see the truth, but merely to assent to what others said about it. Conformity was required, not faith. The Church had claimed to be Christ, and said it alone could save the soul; and now the creed came, and said that it was Christ, and that it alone could save the soul. But both the Church and the creed, in making these claims, proved themselves to be. not Christ, but antichrist. Salvation by dogma calls away the soul from Christ to itself, as much as salvation by the Church did before.

As the Church took the place of Christ in Romanism, so the dogma took the place of Christ in Protestantism.

Protestants saw that the Church of Rome was antichrist, but failed to see that their own system of belief, when made essential to salvation, was another antichrist, more subtle, and therefore perhaps more dangerous, than the other.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me repeat that I only call the Church of Rome, or any other church, an antichrist, when it makes itself essential to the soul's salvation; and I call no creed antichrist till it makes the same idolatrous pretension. Not till they come *in the name of Christ*, saying, "I am he," do they become antichrist. Whenever, therefore, in the hands of any of its ministers, the Church of Rome forgets or omits this sacrilegious claim, and simply does its work for human souls, it becomes a part of the true body of Jesus Christ on earth; and whenever the dogma comes, not claiming to be accepted as infallible and vital truth, but offering its aid to human need, so far as it can be honestly received, then it also becomes a medium through which Christ may visit the soul. When the Church or when the creed exalts itself, it is abased; but, when it humbles itself, it is exalted.

If it is true that an opinion about Christ is a different thing from Christ himself, it is evident that to rely on the opinion for salvation is not the same thing as to rely upon Christ for salvation. Then the opinion calls away our faith from Christ. True, as an opinion or object of belief, it becomes false as an object of faith or reliance; and, if false, then, being a substitute for the true, it is antichrist.

But is it not evident that trust in an opinion is one thing, trust in Christ quite another? Christ is not to

the true believer an opinion, a belief, a theory, a creed: he is an inward life. The only true faith is faith in Christ born within us, the hope of glory. The living Christ, rooted in the heart, revealed by the Holy Spirit to the soul, is the real object of faith,— not the opinion about him, formed by reflection in the region of the understanding, and held in the memory.

All experimental Christians have seen and admitted this distinction. "A string of opinions is no more Christian faith," said Wesley, "than a string of beads is Christian practice." Quotations to the same effect might be multiplied from writers in every section of the Church. Even a low stage of spiritual life shows the difference between belief in a doctrine and faith in a person. This distinction holds even in regard to others whom we have not seen, and with whom we have no such spiritual intercourse as most Christians are satisfied they have with Christ. I have faith in Milton, in Washington, in Franklin, in Fénelon. They are personally my guides, masters, friends. They influence me, through my faith in them, more than do others whom I have seen. Of them as of Christ, I can say, "Whom, not having seen, I love; in whom, though now I see them not, yet, believing, I rejoice." But suppose I were to put my opinions of their character and mission into the form of articles: would assent to those articles be equivalent to faith in the men themselves? Surely not. My creed about Milton might be signed by many persons, who, accepting it intellectually, would yet not receive the influence from Milton that I do. The influence comes from Milton himself, as inwardly known, loved, and imitated.

The distinction above explained is, as I have said, commonly admitted; but it is not generally understood that we lose one influence when we accept the other in its place. When we look in one direction, we necessarily look away from every other. When we rest on opinions for our salvation, we cease to rest on Christ for our salvation. One thing is needful as an end, and one thing as means. The end of the commandment is human love: the means to that human love is the reception of the Divine Love, which flows into the world through the living mediation of Christ. Christ himself is the way, not Calvin's creed or Priestley's creed about Christ,— Christ himself, seen in the Gospels or seen in the heart, seen in history or seen in our own private experience, seen through the holy mediations of maternal love and Christian goodness, known through the inspired voices of sages, poets, preachers, but seen and known in some way as a personal influence of truth and love, leading our hearts to God.

Influence helps, but formulas hinder, the influx of God to the soul. "It is the spirit that quickens: the flesh profits nothing," said the Master himself. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," is asserted by Paul; and we have only been repeating this assertion in all we have now said. "The letter kills." Can we say more than that?

Jesus carefully abstains from any formal or systematic statement of his opinions. He teaches, not doctrine, but truth. His word is seed. It is spirit and life. He utters it in vivid, poetic figures; in homely, household illustration; in penetrating, incisive antithesis; in

suggestive aphorism; not in systematic formula. He asks for faith in himself, never for belief of statements about himself. He recognizes the divine law of mediation through personality. He knows (as has been said) that seed-truth must not be ground or baked into a loaf. He demands the living consent of the soul, not the formal assent of the understanding. Men shall come into heaven, and sit at his right hand, on the last day, who do not know intellectually that they have ever seen him or done anything for him. THE PURE IN HEART see God. God is seen by the heart more than by the intellect. It is the Spirit of God in the heart that quickens: the flesh of external formula profits nothing.

For what we have been saying, we claim no originality. Several sections of the Protestant Church have powerfully protested against this antichrist of dogma. Eminent among them have been the Quakers, the Methodists, the Swedenborgians, the Unitarians, and the Transcendentalists. Each of these bodies, from its own stand-point, has attacked with successful energy the doctrine of salvation by Dogma.

The Quakers (whose extraordinary movement in the seventeenth century anticipated the most advanced philosophy, the most enlightened theology, the most radical moral reforms, and the most thorough reorganizing socialism of the nineteenth),— the Quakers attacked Protestant Orthodoxy in their profound doctrine of the Inner Light. "The soul," they said, "is saved, not by what it believes intellectually, but by what it sees spiritually." "Eternal life is to know God," says Barclay; "and God is only known by his

Son, and the Son only known by the Spirit, which gives an inward sight of him."

This protest of the Quakers against the Dogma has been frequently observed, but it has not been so often noticed that the great movement of Wesley was also a rising-up of the religious instincts against the two antichrists of Church and creed. John Wesley had himself been through all that religion of form which we now call Ritualism before he arrived at the vital experience which was the root of Methodism. At Oxford, and afterward in Georgia, he was a zealous Churchman, seeking to save his own soul by fidelity to the church forms and church obedience, by ascetic devotion, by self-sacrificing philanthropy, by fasting and prayer; but this brought him no peace. He repeated the experience of Paul the Pharisee, and of Luther the monk, striving for salvation by works, and ending with the same cry, "Wretched man that I am!" Thus, as Luther through Stapfer was led to Christ in simple faith, so Wesley through the Moravian was led to Christ in simple faith; and the great Methodist movement began when he passed from Ritualism, and became a childlike believer in the unpurchased gospel of Christian love and truth.

This fact — that, in the experience of Wesley, Ritualism preceded Methodism — is of great significance in determining the respective positions of these two systems to each other in the order of the advancing Church. Agassiz founds a system of classification based upon embryonic development. He fixes the rank of a species of animals in the scale of being by noticing which organization precedes the other, and

which is a subsequent development, in the same individual. If an embryo breathes by gills, and these gills afterward become replaced by lungs, he regards the organization by lungs as higher than the organization by gills. If the embryo lobster has the organization of a trilobite, he argues that the trilobite is a lower being in the scale of creation. Trilobites of one period become lobsters in a subsequent one. Now, if we can trace in Christian experience any similar progress, we may determine the respective order and rank of sects and systems. If the tendency of Christian experience is out of Catholicism into Protestantism, then Protestantism is the higher. If the tendency, again, is out of Ritualistic Protestantism into Methodistic, or from that of form to that of inward experience, then we may say that Methodism is higher than Ritualism, and an advance upon it. Now, the concurrent experience of Paul, Luther, and Wesley, shows that they had exhausted the religion of form before they attained to that of inward experience: they passed from the law to grace, from works to faith. Paul passed from Jewish works to Christian faith, Luther from monkish Christian works to Protestant Christian faith, Wesley from High-Church-of-England works to Methodist Christian faith. The striking and important fact in the experience of Wesley is that he thoroughly tried that system which we now call Ritualism, and found it wanting, before he passed into that other experience which made of him one of the great lights of the Church and one of the great benefactors of mankind. Methodism has its errors and defects, no doubt. We shall presently

see that its tendency toward emotional religion is its peculiar danger. But it cannot be doubted by any sagacious student of comparative Christian theology that the Methodism of Wesley is one of the highest forms of Christianity yet attained in the Church. We may therefore say that conversions from Protestantism to Romanism, and from spiritual Christianity to formal Christianity, are but retrograde and sporadic movements, having no large significance. They indicate only eddies in the Church, not the main current. There have been reactions in the Church from the higher to the lower stages of spiritual life, which have checked its development. These have usually been importations from other religions and made no part of the unfolding process.

Swedenborg, again, has, from the basis of a spiritual insight, protested against the antichrist of Orthodoxy. The profound mysticism of his soul, joined with a most healthy intellect, has given to us in his writings a system of rational spiritualism which no theologian can neglect, except to his own loss. The great value of it I think is, that it lifts us above dogma into the light of the living facts and the permanent law of the spirit. It is injured by the presence of Swedenborg's strong individualism, and is to be used rather as suggestion than as instruction; but, as suggestion, it is of great value. The reaction of his will against the dead Calvinism of the Scandinavian Church sometimes confuses his spiritual vision; but his spiritual insight was, perhaps, the most powerful vouchsafed to any man in these later days.

Mr. Buckle, in his second volume, drew a vivid pict-

ure of the evils resulting to civilization from the antichrist of Form in Spain and the antichrist of Dogma in Scotland. It is an historic warning of the most important kind. Mr. Buckle wrote as a pleader and advocate. He is the prosecuting officer of Positivism. He gathers his facts in the interest of that too material system. He is, therefore, to be read cautiously, and remembering this bias; but his light, being thrown on history from a new point, illuminates much which has before been left in shadow.

The next antichrist is religious emotionalism, or the religion of fear and feeling.

With a large part of the Christian world, Christianity, religion, and piety are synonymous terms: only, Christianity is supposed to be a lower state of the soul than religion, and religion a lower state than piety. Piety is the culminating point to which we ascend through religion from Christianity. A man, it is thought, may be a Christian, in a low and common sense of the word, without being religious; and he may be a religious man, in an external way, without being pious. When he professes a belief in Christ and Christianity, he is a Christian; when he goes forward from that point and devotes himself to religious duties, becomes a member of the Church and a diligent attendant on religious meetings, reads his Bible daily, has family prayers, respects the Lord's Day, then he is religious; but when he goes still further, and encounters an experience of emotion,—being exercised by fear and hope, tormented by a sense of sin, and made happy by a feeling of forgiveness, and so comes at last into devout relations of prayer and praise

to God,—he has ascended another step, and is pious. His salvation is now fully assured. Before, it was doubtful; but, now, it is almost certain.

Emotional piety is therefore, by many, considered to be a higher condition of the soul than Christianity or religion. An intelligent trust in the truths of Christianity and an honest attempt to do God's will are thought of less value in his eyes than an emotional experience passing through certain definite states of fear, hope, joy, and ecstatic emotion.

This emotional religion often becomes a substitute for Christianity. Men trust for salvation to a present or past experience of this sort, instead of trusting to the truth and love of God as seen in Christ. They ask concerning a man, "Is he pious?" meaning, "Has he passed through such and such a religious experience?" Men are taught to rely for their salvation, not upon the divine idea of Eternal Love shown to them in Christ, but upon some emotional experience of their own souls. Piety then becomes an antichrist. It comes in the name of Jesus, saying, "I am Christ," and deceives many; teaching men to seek for a life in themselves rather than in a life from God. It produces morbid self-analysis, sickly struggles after mere feeling, a selfish and personal religion, instead of the generous and broad religion of the gospel.

It is a mistake to say that piety is more than religion, and religion more than Christianity. Piety is the lowest stage of the religious life; Christianity, the highest. A man may be pious without being religious, and religious without being Christian. For one may experience religious emotion occasionally, without de-

voting his life to any religious object. A man may pray fervently every morning, and fervently every night, and yet spend the day in some purely worldly occupation having no relation to God or to duty. His ruling motive in life may be power, wealth, reputation, knowledge, or pleasure. Then he is not a religious man, though he is at times a pious man. A religious man is one who devotes his life to some high object, universal and unselfish.

The brigands of Italy, before they go out to rob and murder, pray fervently to the Virgin. There is no hypocrisy in this. Their devotion is sincere: it is merely piety without religion. Walter Scott, in *Quentin Durward*, describes the same psychological phenomenon in the case of Louis XI. of France, who prayed fervently to the Virgin for success in one little crime he was about to commit; promising her, if she let him succeed, it should be the last. This is another case of piety without religion.

It is also a fact that there is usually more of piety in the lower forms of religion than in the higher. As we descend, religion becomes more emotional,—less intellectual, less practical. It goes down, out of the reason and out of the will, into the feelings. We see that there is less of emotional piety in the Protestant Church than in the Roman Catholic; less in the Roman Catholic Church than in the Mohammedan; less in Mohammedanism than in Buddhism; less in Buddhism than in Brahmanism. He who has been in Catholic countries, and has seen the churches thronged with worshippers on every festa; has seen the penitents kneeling at every shrine on every week-day; and

who learns how many hours are devoted to prayer by the regular orders, and by all persons seeking to be religious,—knows well that there is more emotional piety in the Roman Catholic Church than in the Protestant.

In Protestant countries, men are seldom seen praying. People are reserved in their prayers. In Catholic countries, men, women, and children kneel on the floors of the churches, and are absorbed in their devotion: they go on their knees up the Scala Santa, repeating Paternosters and Ave Marias. Prayer has become an evident part of the business of a portion of the community. But, when you go into Mohammedan countries, prayer is a part of the business of the whole community. Five times a day, when the muezzin proclaims the hour of prayer from the minaret, all men fall prostrate on the ground,—the Turkish shopkeeper suspends his bargain, the Arab sailor falls on the deck of the Nile boat. For a moment, all the activity of life is suspended: every human being prays. In Pagan countries, devotion is carried still further. Rangoon, a city of Burmah, has a Buddhist pagoda two miles from the city, the road lined all the way with pagodas; and the chief business of the inhabitants is to pray at these shrines every day of every week. Two thousand worshippers are to be found every day prostrate in the chief pagoda, which is an enormous building, gilt all over, standing on the top of a hill, cut into terraces, with marble pavements, colossal lions, lofty pillars, enormous stone jars for ablution; but no bloody sacrifices, only offerings of rice, flowers, and green leaves, before the splendid images of Gautama.

In Brahmanism, human life is organized on devotion. Prayers are so numerous that it would take years to become acquainted with them, and the object of existence is devout absorption in the Infinite Being by asceticism and prayer. But this piety does not make the Brahmin *better* than the Buddhist, nor the Buddhist better than the Mohammedan, nor the Mohammedan better than the Roman Catholic, nor the Roman Catholic better than the Protestant.

I wish we had more piety in Protestantism. I wish we were not ashamed to pray. I respect the heathen for their simple and sincere devotion. I saw lately, in a school geography, a woodcut representing heathen worship, and another representing Christian worship. The heathen was represented prostrate on his face, on the ground, before his idol; the Christian, as sitting comfortably in his pew, listening to a sermon. But devout feeling is not Christianity; and when substituted for it, and made the condition of salvation and test of the soul's state, it becomes an antichrist. It comes in the name of Jesus, and says, "I am Christ, and I can save your soul." Then it becomes our duty to say that it is *not* Christ, and that it cannot save the soul. We must not forget, while we are admiring these manifestations of devotion in Paganism and elsewhere, who it was who rebuked those who prayed at the corners of the streets; who it was who said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet"; and who it was who rebuked the endless repetitions and many prayers of the heathen and the Pharisee.

Thus, we see that the external rites and formulas which Christ put aside in his temptation, and the vis-

ible religion and piety to which he objected, have come up again in the Church, one after another, each saying in its turn, "I am Christ," and each deceiving many. But their day is passing. The true Christ is near at hand. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." God is waiting and seeking for true piety,— piety which is not emotion, but love; which is emancipated from form, delivered from the yoke of fear, and which is a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

Gentlemen and friends, Christian brothers, Alumni of this school of Christian truth,— I congratulate you on the work to which you are called. No antichrist of church authority, of Orthodoxy, or of emotional religion, comes between your soul and the sight of Christ at his coming. Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free, and be not subject again to any yoke of bondage,— not to creeds, not to churches, not to ceremonies, nor even to emotions. Let the dead bury their dead: go ye and preach the kingdom of God. Let your words be seeds of truth, to bear fruit hereafter, if not now. Look forward to the great day of Christ's coming in the clouds of heaven, in an illumination of spiritual religion, in a wide-spread flow of brotherly love, in a simple trust in God's fatherly care. The day is sure to come in which all churches, creeds, and parties shall be dissolved and swallowed up in the light of love. Labor for the coming of that day. We may not live to see it, though methinks its dawn is already illuminating the mountain-tops The advanced guard of many differing

hosts are already meeting in the Valley of Decision. Adopt for your maxim, then, the legend and device on the seal of John Quincy Adams, — an acorn striking root, with the motto, "Alteri sæculo," — "For the coming age."

Let us not pine for any fleshpots of Egypt; let us not yield to any poor reaction from Christ to antichrist, like the foolish Galatians, bewitched by hollow forms, empty of the best life of love.

As our brave brothers and friends to-day go gladly to fight for freedom and union in the State,* so let us contend as steadfastly for freedom and union in the Church. Let us stand by our flag,— the white, blue, and red of Christianity,— the white faith, pure and simple; the hope blue as the heavens to which it aspires; and the glowing red of a divine and human love. And as our late splendid visitor, who

> "Fired the length of Ophiucus huge
> In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shook pestilence and war,"

comes only occasionally, and soon disappears, while the gentle and regular planets spin on soft axle through their steadfast orbits, without haste or rest, attended with silver ring or sparkling satellites, so let us leave the fiery and ominous theologies to come and go; dreadful portents, shaking war on their way; while we circle ever more around God, seen in Christ, as the sun of our system and the light of our souls.

*This paper was read at the beginning of the War for union and freedom.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

THE writer of the Fourth Gospel (probably the Apostle John) has introduced his narrative with a deeply interesting preamble, which is at once so compact with thought and so brimming with life as to occupy and task the best thinkers in their best hours. The interpretation of this famous passage has suffered much from sectarian efforts to force it into the service of narrow dogmas. Trinitarians on the one side, and Unitarians on the other, have sometimes tried to make it appear that this profound writer was merely arguing in the interest of their special controversy. But his theme is not partial, but universal. This brief passage contains the history of all revelations. It gives us the genesis, progress, and completion of the divine manifestations. This is sufficiently evident from the terms used, which are the largest, and used in the widest sense,— "the Word," "Life," "Light," "Darkness," "Grace," "Truth."

If we read this noble passage with no sectarian bias or prepossession, but a simple desire to know its meaning, its difficulties will soon begin to vanish, and its real sense will become apparent. We must not seek to put our own ideas into the passage, but to extract out of it those of the writer.

The first thing we notice, in reading the first verse of John, is the peculiar use he gives to the term "Word." We ask, naturally, What does he intend by it?

"Word" means expression, utterance, speech. Man's word is his utterance, and his utterance is his word. In like manner, God's word is his utterance, and his utterance is his word.

The usage of the Old Testament confirms this view. In the Old Testament, we read of the eye of God, the ear of God, the arm of God, the hand of God, and the word of God. We have no difficulty in understanding the meaning of these expressions. When we read that "the eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good," we understand by his eye his omniscient knowledge. When we read, "His ear is open to their cry," we know that by this is intended that the Lord listens to prayer. When we read that "his arm brought salvation," we comprehend that this is the power of the Almighty exerted to sustain and bless. When we read that "by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," we see clearly that this implies the utterance of his will. We do not argue that the eye is a separate person in the Godhead, nor that the arm is a separate person. Nor is there any more reason to think that the "word" is a separate person than to assert this of the eye, the arm, or the ear.

Before going further, let us consider the following points:—

(*a*) John must, of course, have expected to be understood by his readers. His first readers were the in-

habitants of Asia Minor, where he wrote his Gospel. The term "Word," as used by him, could not have been a new term never used by them, but one with which they were familiar: otherwise, they could not have understood what he was speaking of.

(*b*) The term "Word," thus used, is peculiar to John. No one among the writers of the New Testament but him uses the phrase in this absolute sense. The others frequently speak of "the word of God," but not of "the Word" by itself; and, except in this passage, John nowhere uses this expression without some qualifying adjunct.

(*c*) In the Old Testament and the New, we find the term "word" used in a sense almost equivalent to this. We find God's word spoken of as a person, running to and fro, leaping down from the heavens, coming to the prophets, creating the heavens and their host, etc.

("The word of God came to Nathan," etc., I. Chron. xvii., 3. "The word of God came to John in the wilderness," etc., Luke iii., 2. "His word runneth very swiftly," Ps. cxlvii., 15. "The worlds were framed by the word of God," Heb. xi., 3. "By the word of God the heavens were of old," II. Pet. iii., 5. "Thine Almighty word leapt down from heaven from his royal throne," etc., Wisdom of Sol. xviii., 15.)

(*d*) Not only the "word of God" is thus personified in the Bible, but so also are the eye, the ear, the hand, and the arm of God. We have no difficulty in understanding what is meant in these cases, nor do we ever suppose that personification implies personality.

(*e*) If, therefore, John had simply said, "In the beginning was the word of God and the word of God was

with God, and the word was God himself," the Jews would readily have understood him. They would have understood him to mean that God spoke, or revealed himself in some way, in the beginning; that he manifested his power at that time. But John does not say this: he says "the Word" in a universal form. He must therefore have intended by it revelation in a more universal sense,—not any particular revelation, but the principle of all revelations. He meant to speak of the divine principle, or that energy of the divine nature which causes all manifestation on the part of Deity.

(*f*) We find that among the Jews, in the time of the apostle, there were persons who, by their study of Plato, had been led to take up this very problem of the principle of revelation or manifestation in the Deity. "Why is it and how is it that God reveals himself?" was a question with which Plato and the Platonists, Philo and his followers, and afterwards the Gnostics, were much exercised; and, in their theories, they were inclined to separate God's manifestation from God himself, and to make the revealing energy in the Deity a kind of subordinate and separate being. John probably refers to their opinions, and means to oppose this error, in the first and second verses of the passage.

I am aware that some writers explain "word," or "logos," to mean reason or wisdom: and others who explain it to mean power. And it may, doubtless, sometimes mean reason and sometimes power. But these are derived and secondary meanings: the primary meaning is *utterance.* Power may be expressed by the divine word, reason may be expressed by it;

but the word itself is neither reason nor power, but the utterance or expression of them. As the principal office of human speech is to express a man's thought, it easily happened, by a common figure, that the term came to mean thought or reason. But the original and primary meaning of logos, or word, we repeat, was utterance or expression; and, in the passage before us, the primary meaning is the one which best suits the purpose and aim of the writer.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "In the beginning," says the Book of Genesis, "*God created.*" "In the beginning," adds this writer, "*God spoke*"; for creation itself was speech. "The Word was with God": it was nothing separate from him, no emanation from him, no falling away from him, as the Gnostics were beginning to think. But "the Word was God"; or, rather, "God was the Word." He was utterance, he was revelation. When he created the universe, he at the same time manifested himself. Creation, therefore, was not something outside of God, or God acting on some material foreign from himself; but it was an utterance of the divine thought, it was the first spoken word of God. This word was, therefore, in the beginning with God. Revelation is no new thing, but an old thing,— old as God himself, who has always spoken.

This is what is intended by the last clause of the first verse. "God was the Word," not "the Word was God" (*θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* is the expression). The object of John was, not to prove the Deity of the word, not that revelation was a divine being, but that the Deity was

his own revelation. He asserts here, not the Deity of revelation, but the revelation of Deity.

His purpose, as continually shown, and repeated in the second verse, is to assert that revelation is not something which can exist away from God, but only where God himself is. He teaches the immanence of God in his revelation. This is the intention of the second verse, which asserts that revelation was in the beginning with God, and not away from him; and nothing was made which was not itself speech. By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made; but the heavens themselves have ever since been a word of the Lord. He said, "Let there be light"; but the light, when it came, came to speak of him. Thus, the word is God speaking, and all things are made by God speaking. So the whole inanimate creation, the things made, were the first revelation of God. The visible universe, the order and beauty of heaven and earth, are a divine speech,— are God speaking.

This was his first word.

But when God spake again, and uttered his second word, then "in him," in this divine speech and speaker, "was life." Life is a second word, because it is an advance in the divine revelations. Life in itself contains light. A living soul has an inward illumination: God is always speaking in it and through it. The soul, our inward life, is also our inward light. "The life was the light of men." "It shines in darkness" indeed,— darkened by human sin, darkened by human error. We do not comprehend the light that is within us. We do not see God plainly. The pure in heart see God. If we were pure in heart, we

should see God as plainly with the inward eye as we see the universe with the outward eye; and, even as it is, what we really *know* of God, we know by this inward faculty, by this inward insight. This, then, is God's second word,—the life in the soul itself, which is an inner light.

The light within us is "the true light, which lightens every man who comes into the world." This light of God is in every soul. There is enough of it to make men feel after God, trying to find Him who is not far from any one of us; for in him we live and move, and have our being. By this inner light we are enabled to see something of the Eternal Power and Deity manifested in outward creation.

God has therefore spoken to the whole race of men, both in the outward universe and in their own souls. But "the light shines in darkness." We are not pure enough, truthful enough, generous enough, to see God; for there is an eternal law fixed in the order of nature, that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Just as things of sense must be discerned through the senses, so things of the spirit must be discerned through the spirit. A man whose outward eyes are blind cannot see the sun, no matter how pure his heart may be. So a man whose heart is not pure cannot see God, no matter how keen his intellect or how clear his bodily senses. Now, it is a matter of fact that men do not see God plainly. They are groping and feeling for him through fifty different religions, fifty different creeds, and who knows how many forms of worship? The Buddhist in Eastern Asia is groping after God with a prayer-mill, turning a winch with his

hand. The Brahman feels after God by his sacrifices, his liturgy, his sacred books. The Indian woman, by the river-bank, holds up her hands, and cries, "O thou great Everywhere, save my child!" Some nations find in the sun the best emblem of the Deity. The African has his fetich,—a plant, a stone, or a stick,—in which he finds something divine. Thus men look abroad for the God who is within them. Therefore, it was necessary to speak again. In his infinite love, God uttered another word; and this word was Christ. There was nothing sudden or abrupt in the coming of this later word. As the day comes upon the earth in soft gradations, first a pale light in the east, forerunning the dawn, in which hangs the morning star like a lamp,—light-bearing Phosphoros, Lucifer, son of the morning; then a redder tinge, a glow of light in the opposite sky; and so wave after wave of light rolls up, extinguishing the stars, till the great sun shoots his first level ray across forest tops or ocean waves,—so gradual, so well prepared, was the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. All whose faces were turned to the east saw this glow, saw the morning aurora, long before. Isaiah saw the first gleam of the morning twilight,—saw that the day was coming in which law should change to love, and the inner principle of religion be joy and peace, not duty or fear. Many others saw it, and were called prophets; but their foresight consisted in looking in the right direction. And just before the sun rose came honest, earnest John the Baptist, as a witness of the coming light, to make men ready to receive it; in his honesty and humility, declaring that he himself was not the

light, but only a witness of it,—declaring that the true light was already enlightening every man, if he would only see it. Thus, God, who made the world, was always in the world, and yet not known by it; always coming to his own people, yet never received by them; only received by a few here and there, who so became his children, ceasing to be mere servants. There were always a few true children of God, his spiritual children; not outwardly children, because descended from Abraham, but inwardly children, because born of God's Spirit.

Thus God spoke. His first word was in the beginning, uttered in nature, providence, history; his second word was uttered in the human soul, giving it inward life and inward light; and his third word was spoken in Jesus Christ, in the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us.

These are the three revelations which God has made, —his three utterances, his three words. So I understand this passage to assert. But is this true? And in what sense is it true?

That God speaks in nature, that nature is his word, we all agree. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,—even his eternal power and Godhead"; that is, the visible universe, from the first day of its creation, has been a constant revelation to man of an invisible Divine Power behind and within it.

But what does Nature show us of God? It shows:

1. Power. The universe is full of power. We see great forces at work all around us,—some apparent

and terrible forces, which, from their irregular action and destructive effects, produce awe and transient feelings of reverence among all nations. Such is the power of wind in storms and hurricanes; the power of electricity in lightning; of earthquakes, volcanoes, floods. These apparently irregular movements first awaken the human mind to the sense of the divine in nature, because, as they seem not to come by law, they appear to come by will. But, as man reflects, he sees still more power in the regular movements of nature than in those which are abnormal. In the great silent movements of the seasons; the flood of life which sweeps over the earth with each returning spring; the deluge which falls, not suddenly to destroy, but in gentle rains, dews, and snows, softly distributed through the equal year; in the electric storms which sweep round the world unnoticed, vitalizing the air; in all-pervading heat, keeping every particle on the globe in constant motion,— we see more of power, as we see more of order.

2. Law. Therefore, law is the next divine attribute shown to us in nature. Force gives the blow, but law directs the arm which wields it. The more that we observe, the more we discover of law. Irregularities become regular, transients disappear, constants multiply; accident is gradually banished from the world; chance is found to have its laws also; and we can often calculate by the doctrine of chances how many of some kind of casualties shall happen every year. The Divine Will which we thought we saw in lightning and tempest ceases to be Will and becomes Nature, as we see that lightning and tempest have also their laws.

3. Wisdom. But these laws are not blind: they are full of meaning, they co-operate to certain ends, they combine into a unity of purpose. There is some rein which guides these powerful coursers, so that they draw together and move toward a common result. A single force, working regularly, does not imply intelligence; but, the moment many laws are found co-operating, intelligence is the inevitable inference. But all these laws are working together in the world,— working toward an end which is progress or development. Everything is advancing from death to life, from life to greater life. Unorganized matter is becoming organized, low forms of organization are replaced by higher forms. So history comes in,— first physical history, then human history; the idea of all history being progress, and progress being the change from death to life.

4. Goodness. Progress, then, involves a continual creative activity,— a continual addition to the amount of life in the world, God constantly communicating more and more of his own being, which is life. But he who gives continually as much as others can receive, and who gives not merely what he has, but what he is, must desire to communicate happiness; that is, he is good. Nature, therefore, shows us the goodness of God; and thus we see in nature first force or power, then power resolving itself into law, then law proceeding from intellect, next intellect manifesting itself as intending progress, and progress showing goodness. And here I think we have reached the highest point in the revelation of nature. This is what God reveals to us of himself in nature, and this seems to be all.

The second revelation which God makes of himself is in the human soul itself, in which is life; and "in life," says the apostle, "is the light of man." This is what Jesus calls "the light within us." "If the light within you be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Man's soul was made in the image of God: therefore, by knowing himself, so far as he is uncorrupt, he can know God. But is there anything in the human soul, of a divine element, which is not in nature? Does the soul teach us only what nature has already taught, or does it teach us something new?

It seems to me that the second divine word, the word spoken in the soul, is not the same revelation of God as the word spoken in nature, but another word, and a different one.

The idea which we have of God is a compound idea, and not a simple one. Let me give the idea in a passage from the Vedas, translated by Sir William Jones: "There is one living and true God, everlasting; without body, parts, or passion; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible."

This is pure monotheism. It teaches the simple unity of God. It declares God to be a simple, indivisible substance, with a complex character. Whence came this idea of unity to the ancient Hindu mind? If we set aside revelation, there only remain nature and the soul. Did these Hindu sages derive it from nature? What is there in nature which conveys the idea of simple unity,—of a unit not composed of parts? Everything which we see in the outward universe is made of parts. Every single thing in nature is, there

fore, a complex unit, not a single unit. The imperial sun, lord of the day, fountain of light and heat, pervading space with his rays, making everything manifest where his beams fall, is the best type in nature of the Deity. But the sun is not a pure unit: it has parts, an upper and lower side, a right and left side, a within and without, a centre and circumference. The only simple unit that we know is the soul itself,—our own personal, individual being,—the self within. When we say, "I think," "I feel," "I choose," we mean by this "I" a substance, without parts, indivisible, which has neither a right side nor left, an up nor down, neither centre nor circumference. This "I" is a simple invisible substance, with a complex character. It has a faculty of thought, of love, of action; but it is the same thing which thinks, feels, and acts. It is not one part of the soul which thinks, and another part which acts; but it is the whole soul which first thinks, and then acts. It is not one part of the soul which sees through the eye, and another part which listens through the ear; but the whole soul looks, and the whole soul listens.

1. The idea of unity, therefore, as applied to God, is taken from the soul itself; for it cannot be found anywhere else. With this idea, taken from our own soul, we go to nature, and find it justified by what we see there. In nature, we find a beautifully organized body, but without a soul to it till we find a soul in ourselves, and transfer that soul to nature. The religion of nature is either pantheism or polytheism: before we become acquainted with the order of nature, *polytheism;* after we became acquainted with it, *pan-*

theism. The idea of divine personality does not come from nature, but from the human soul.

2. And, again, the idea of God *as a Creator* comes from the soul, and not from nature. Nature shows us growth and development, not creation; shows us no pure beginning, but only birth; shows us progress by law, not miraculous commencement. Therefore, science, studying nature, avoids the idea of creation, and prefers that of development: it pushes creation away as far as it can. We used to think the world was created six thousand years ago; but science says, "No: there were a hundred thousand years of geological changes before that." And science proves it by God's rock-scriptures. Science turns over the rocky leaves one after another, deciphers the fossil hieroglyphics, and shows great cycles of time in which development was going on. Well, we admit all this; but still there was a creation before that,—of rocks, metals, gases, fluids, and the germs of organized life. But science, taking breath, says again: "Not so. We will have a little more development first Before the solid world there existed, for some millions of years, nebulous matter, out of which the earth grew by law, as a plant from its seed." Science has a right to prove this, if it can: only, we theologians say, "There was a beginning, somewhere, of this development; for every progressive series implies a beginning, and that beginning is creation." And this science cannot deny.

The idea of creation, not coming from nature, comes from the soul; and it is implied in every act of will,—every free act. Free will is, in man, what creative energy is in God. To create is to originate a new

movement, a new series of things: to act freely is to originate a new series of events. Creation is the same as causation; but the idea of cause is not to be found outside of us, but inside of us,— in our own freedom of will. Thus, we see God, as a Creator, by a light reflected from our own souls.

Thus, too, the idea of holiness, or inward purity, is not from outside of us, not from nature, but from the soul. Beauty we see in nature; holiness, in the soul. A God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity is a revelation of the soul.

We find, then, in nature a manifestation of God,— a word of God. We find in the soul another word of God.

The word in nature utters power, wisdom, law, goodness. The word in the soul utters personality, unity, creation, freedom, holiness.

We now come to the third word of God; namely, the Man Christ Jesus. The first word was God in nature; the second word was God in the soul; the third word is God manifested in a human life.

Two questions arise here. First, the historical question: *Was* Christ, in this sense, a word of God? Secondly, the theological question: *How* was he the word of God? To which we may afterward add a third, or practical religious question: *Why* was he the word of God?

The question of fact or history is, Was Jesus a divine word in any other sense than all great men and good men are divine words? Is there any essential difference between Christ, on the one hand, and Abraham, Moses, and Elias, on the other? Or between

him and Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Solon? Between his inspiration and that of Homer, Dante, Sir Isaac Newton? This is a question of fact, not a question of theology; a question to be decided not by speculation, but by looking at the thing itself.

Now, we plainly see that there is a divine inspiration in all greatness and goodness. We have said as much in saying that God speaks in the human soul his second word. But the question now is, Does God speak *another* word again, and make a yet higher manifestation in Christ? Is the word in Christ an advance on the word spoken in the universal soul, making another communication? Is it the beginning of a new order of truth or only the culmination of the old order?

To answer this question, we must see, by going back, what we have found revealed to us in nature and in the soul, and so learn if there is anything in our idea of God unaccounted for; and, if so, whether that has come to us specially through Christ.

Through nature, we saw manifested (1) power, (2) law, (3) wisdom, (4) goodness. Through the soul, we saw manifested (1) unity and personality, (2) creation or freedom, (3) holiness. Now, if Jesus only shows us these same qualities carried to their highest point, he is not another word of God, but only a higher power of the same word. But, if he adds some new element, then he is a new manifestation.

Our writer says that the law was given by Moses, but that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. What is grace, and what is truth?

The grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ convey the idea of an influx of divine love and truth.

It is a gift of God to the soul,—an additional power sufficient to enable it to conquer evil. It is not enough to see goodness as a law: we need to feel it as a power. Through Christ comes to us the power of an eternal life, which shall abide within us, making all things new,—a new birth of the soul, lifting it to a higher plane of being. Christ alone gives such a perfect union with God as shall constitute moral affection. He is one who is himself without sin, who is morally perfect, and who ascribes this perfection, not to himself, but to the life of God flowing perpetually into him. Jesus says, By the grace of God I have been made free from sin to show you that you also shall be free from sin, and perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. This is a very different idea of God from that which we perceive in other revelations. Nature teaches us the goodness of God: Christ teaches us the love of God. These are different things. In nature, God shows himself desiring to make us happy; in Christ, as seeking to unite us with himself. But God is holy; and, while we are sinful, we cannot come into communion with him. We are conscious of sinfulness, and we cannot by our own efforts escape from it. Therefore, we need divine aid in order to be purified; and God, in Christ, offers us such aid. Neither nature nor the soul says anything of forgiveness; and the forgiveness taught in the Old Testament is removing the penalty of sin, but not removing sin itself. The gospel shows us that God loves us, and so it enables us to love him. This writes the law in the heart, substituting joyful obedience for dutiful effort. The goodness of God in the Old Testament is blessing, in

the New Testament it is communion. Forgiveness in the New Testament is reconciliation, atonement, union, — something which does away, not merely with the penalty of sin and the guilt of sin, but also with sin itself.

We therefore find the love of God revealed in Christ to the soul to be a new revelation of the divine character, and one not found in nature nor in the human mind. It is not the general love or good-will of the Creator for his creatures, but the individual personal affection of the Father for his child. It is not the desire to do good, but the need of loving and being loved. It is not merely giving, but giving and receiving; that is, communion. God's life flows forth from him in creation. He gives part of himself in making a world outside of himself. More of his life flows out when he creates souls,— individuals with a power of resisting him and separating themselves from him. His first word went out into an empty universe and never returned,— there was no echo to it; the second went out in the creation of souls made free, so that they could even resist their Maker, disobey him, and turn away from him; but the third Word goes out with a still greater influx of divine life to unite all these free individuals again with God in one grand union, so that God shall be once more all in all.

I will illustrate this by a little parable: —

There was once a king who determined to erect a city. He sent architects and workmen and materials. He laid out streets and squares, dug reservoirs and brought in water in aqueducts, made roads and canals leading from it to the surrounding country, and, when

all was ready, sent a colony to inhabit it. These inhabitants went to and fro through the streets, examined the city, and said to one another, "What a powerful government it must be that was able to build this city!" And, as they looked further and examined it more, they said: "What wisdom, what foresight, did this power display in this city! How wisely was the site chosen! What order and method in all the arrangements! What knowledge in the choice of materials, in building, and in the general plan!" And then, looking still further, they say: "What goodness to *us!* How are our wants foreseen and all provided for! We have high walls to defend us from without; markets, aqueducts, bazaars, gas, paved and lighted streets, within. Everything is arranged for our comfort. The government which built this city, whether it be a monarchy, an oligarchy, or a democracy, has evidently *power*; *wisdom*, and *goodness*."

The inhabitants of the city have thus heard in the city itself one word about the maker of the city. The city itself speaks of its founder's power, wisdom, and goodness; but you observe that they are not yet able to tell whether the founder of the city is one or many, nor what his ideas are about right or wrong.

But now let us suppose that the founder of the city sends a viceroy to live in it, who establishes himself in a central palace, announcing the name of the king for whom he governs, publishing the code of laws, with penalties attached, rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient. He does all this in the name of his absent master. Now, the people know more about the master. They know that he is one.

They also know what his ideas are concerning right and wrong. They have thus heard a second word from him, which brings him nearer to them than the first did.

But let us suppose that these citizens become disorderly. They disobey the laws established for their government. They rebel against the viceroy and his authority. They plunge into vices and commit crimes. They grow idle, intemperate, reckless. So come pauperism, disease, and crime. A famine arises, and many starve to death. A pestilence follows, and they die in the streets. Bands of robbers prowl the streets day and night for plunder and murder. In this state of things, the king who built the city comes to live in it. He becomes personally acquainted with the citizens. He shows them the misery of their course, explains to them the importance of his laws, and the need of obeying them. He establishes hospitals for the sick. He feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the prisoners. The people become personally acquainted with him, and learn to love him because he had loved them.

And, now, it is evident that they have had a new word spoken to them concerning their king. The word is made flesh, and dwells among them; and they have come into personal communion with him.

This story illustrates the three steps of progress in our knowledge of God. That which the citizens learned about their king from the city itself corresponds with what we learn about God from nature,—the city which he has built for us; that which they learned by the government of the viceroy corresponds

with what we learn of God by means of his viceroy,—conscience in the soul itself; and what they learned of their king when he came to live among them corresponds with what we learn of God in Christ "reconciling the world unto himself," and "formed within us, the hope of glory."

It is in this sense that we may regard Jesus as a new divine word, different from the word in nature, also different from the word in the soul. And this is the divinity of Christ: that as God's power, wisdom, and goodness dwell constantly in nature, as God's holiness and freedom constantly manifest themselves anew in the soul's freedom and conscience; so God's love to individuals is constantly manifested in the life of Jesus.

This third manifestation of God was necessary to harmonize the other two. The soul, as freedom, is not in harmony with nature, as law. Love is necessary to reconcile law and freedom. This is the true atonement.

The question of fact being ascertained, we may next consider the question of theology. We have seen that God is in the life of Christ as well as in outward nature and inward nature. But *how* was God in Christ? To answer this question belongs to theology. Let us look at some of the theological answers.

First, we have the orthodox answer. This is the answer given in most of the creeds, and to vary from which exposes one to the charge of heresy in all the great Christian communions. This answer is that "Christ is the eternal Son of God, of one substance, and equal, with the Father; who became man, and continues to be God and man in two natures and one

person forever: so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures are inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ,—the only mediator between God and man."

It is known that Unitarians object to this view on grounds of reason and Scripture. On grounds of reason, they assert that there could have been in Christ but one person. They deny that there could have been two natures in one person; for the union of two natures, one infinite and the other finite, in one person, would imply that this person would, at the same time and in the same sense, possess infinite power and not possess it; possess infinite wisdom, and not possess it; possess infinite goodness, and not possess it,—which would be a contradiction in terms, and it is impossible for the human mind to accept such a contradiction. Thus, we must say (in order to maintain the orthodox doctrine) either that Christ is God and man at a different time, or in a different sense. The first would imply that Christ could pass from his divine nature to his human nature and back again, so as to lose all consciousness, first of the one and then of the other. But this contradicts the terms of the statement. Hence, we must say that Christ must have an infinite nature as God and a finite nature as man, in some *different* sense of nature. But this is equivalent to saying that the union is a mystery; which again is equivalent to saying that we do not know what the union is; which, finally, is to admit that there is *no* orthodox doctrine on the subject.

This is the real objection to the orthodox doctrine

concerning the divinity of Christ. We do not know what it is. We cannot tell what it means. When probed to the bottom, it resolves itself into a mystery or an obscurity. The statement is no statement. Now, it is very wise and right, when we are ignorant of anything, to say, "I do not know." But, then, we ought not to say that we do not know and to say at the same time that we *do* know, and that those who do not know what we know about it are heretics. Our objection to Orthodoxy is that it calls upon us to believe a certain theological proposition, under the penalty of excommunication here and damnation hereafter; and that, when we ask what the proposition is, it replies that it does not know what it is.

The next theological answer is that of Emanuel Swedenborg, who says that Christ was God, because his human nature was his human body, animated by God as its soul. According to this view, there is no such thing in Christ as a human soul. Consequently, he was in no real sense a human being. He merely had a human body; but a human body without a human soul is not a human being. Yet if Christ was not truly a man, then the four Gospels are a mere illusion; for they everywhere represent him as having a human soul as well as a human body. With his human soul he was tempted, with his human soul he prayed, with his human soul he suffered, with his human soul he died. Mainly for this reason, we reject the doctrine of Swedenborg concerning the Lord. It destroys the human nature of Christ.

The third explanation declares that Christ was divine, and was a word of God, because he was a

human medium through whom God revealed his divine love. His human will was in perfect harmony with the will of God, and so his life became a revelation of his Father's will. When Jesus says, "I and my Father are one," he does not intend *one person* (as the orthodox say), nor one nature (as the Swedenborgians imply), but one by becoming united in perfect sympathy of thought, heart, and will.

By this statement, we do not assert, with the Arians, that Jesus was an exceptional person, out of the order of nature, but that he was a representative person, the representation of humanity. He is the second Adam,— man as he is meant to be. He is the true type of human nature; for man was not made to be sinful, but sinless,— to be perfect, as his Father in heaven is perfect. The sinless man is the true man.

Let us now give a paraphrase of this passage, and see how plain and beautiful is its meaning when we apply to it this explanation of the term "Word."

Verse 1. In the beginning of creation, at the commencement of time, was the Divine Revelation. This Divine Revelation was not a separate being from God,— it was not an Eon,— but was with God, and was God himself; for God himself was Revelation.

Verse 2. Divine Revelation is, therefore, no new thing, nor anything intermediate between God and us, but was with God at first, and is with him now.

Verse 3. For revelation is the expression of God, and, when God acts, he expresses himself; and, therefore, by the expression of his will all things were made, and everything made expressed and revealed him.

Verse 4. But not merely the inanimate creation, the

physical universe, is an expression of God. All life is also a manifestation of him; for in him we live and move, and through him we are. The living soul of man is a light of God within, revealing God inwardly in the reason and conscience.

Verse 5. But this inner light is obscured by our ignorance and sin, and so another revelation is necessary.

Verses 6 and 7. The first revelation of God being in nature, and the second in the soul, the coming of the third was heralded by a new prophet,— John the Baptist.

Verse 8. John was not sent to be a revelation, but to bear witness to the revelation whenever it should appear.

Verse 9. Though, even then, the light of God was shining in every man's soul, enlightening him inwardly, if he would only see it and obey it.

Verse 10. God was manifesting himself to the Gentile world. His will made them, and in their creation he revealed himself; yet they did not know him.

Verse 11. He came by his prophets to that which was peculiarly his; and his own people (the Jews) never fully recognized him, nor obeyed his revelations.

Verse 12. But some (both Jews and Gentiles) did receive these prior revelations, and thus, by their faith in God, became his true children.

Verse 13. Not on account of descent from Abraham, but because they were born of God.

Verse 14. And, at last, God's Revelation took a human form,— God speaking to man by man. And now Revelation dwelt among us (not coming and

going, as in the transient inspirations of the prophets) in the beauty of a perfect soul; and we have seen his glory, as of the Only-begotten,— God's fulness revealed in the life and words of Jesus.

Verse 15. And John, who was sent to bear witness to the Light, *did* bear witness to it when he saw it in Jesus Christ (though he knew not that Jesus was the Christ until his baptism, verses 31–33).

And John said, "This is he of whom I said, A man comes after me [in time] who is preferred before me [in rank]; for he always was before me [in true worth and desert]."

Verse 18. Therefore, though no man hath ever seen God, Jesus, the Christ, has revealed him.

Object of John in this Preamble.— Three different objects are ascribed to John in this passage. Some suppose he had a dogmatical, others a polemical, others a religious purpose. Let us consider this point.

Had John a dogmatical purpose?

It is supposed that his object was to teach that Jesus was God. But he declares it to be the purpose of his whole Gospel (chapter xx., 31) to lead men to believe "that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God," and, believing, to have life through his name. It would seem an impotent conclusion, after having taught them in a dozen verses that Jesus was the Supreme God, to employ twenty chapters afterward to convince them that he was the Messiah. Besides, if his purpose was to teach that Jesus was the Supreme Being, why did he not say so directly? Why not say, "In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God"? There could not then have been any mistake

as to his meaning. John has certainly not taught *directly* that Jesus was God: has he taught it *indirectly?* Is it a necessary inference from this passage? By no means. The only necessary inference is this: that the Word, which was God himself speaking, *dwelt* in Jesus, and abode in him, filling him with the fulness of God. But to be filled with God is one thing: to be God himself is another and a very different thing. God dwells in all living Christians, and they also may be filled with his fulness; but it does not follow that they are God himself.

So far as the purpose of John was doctrinal, it was to teach that Jesus, the Christ, has become the final expression of the divine will, and is filled with the divine fulness; and that, through this medium, we also may have access to God.

Had John a polemical purpose?

Besides the universal purposes which John had in view in this passage, he may, no doubt, have alluded to local and temporary opinions. Thus (verses 1, 2), he seems to deny the doctrine of his day, that an emanation of God created the worlds, or that the Logos was any thing other than God himself. Again (verse 14), he refers to the Docetic opinions of his day, that Jesus was human only in appearance (see I. John iv., 1–3). Again, he refers (verses 8, 15, and elsewhere) to those who would elevate John the Baptist to an equality with Jesus.

The chief purpose of John was to teach that the revelation made by Christ was no new thing, nor essentially different from God's other revelations, but that it was fuller and more complete, and brought us

into a filial communion with God. He teaches that God has always revealed himself to man: first, in nature and creation; second, in the soul, with its living faculties of insight and aspiration; and, thirdly, in Christ, as the fulfilment of all positive revelation, or God manifest in the flesh.

This was the intention of John,— to bring into one focus, in Christ, all the revelations of God, and to show how his was to be the fulness of the universal religion. There could be no profounder, no broader aim than this; and it invests the passage with a grandeur which places it at the head of all Scriptures.

OLD AND NEW IDEAS CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

A SERMON was recently delivered in Boston, before the Young Men's Christian Association, by an eminent preacher, on the Divinity of Jesus. I found a full and carefully prepared report of this sermon in one of our journals. As I read it, I said: "This is the way men discussed this question fifty years ago. I perceive by this sermon how far we have gone since, how much better we now understand the vital meaning of Christ's Divinity than we did then." And I think it may be useful to show the difference of the two points of view, — what was then thought to be important in the matter and what is considered important now.

Our preacher began his discourse by declaring that the great question of the present age is, "What think you of Christ?" and said it was the object of his discourse to help his hearers to a correct belief concerning Christ. And, then, he went on to argue that Jesus claimed to be the Eternal God, and that, if he was not this, he was an impostor.

This is the way in which believers in the Trinity argued fifty years ago. First, they asserted that the important question — the most important of all questions — is an intellectual question, a question of correct belief, of right opinion. Where, exactly, do we place

Jesus in the universe? What is his precise rank in the scale of creation? What title ought he to have? What ought we to say about his nature, dignity, power?

Having thus made a mere intellectual question — a matter of opinion — the most vital of all questions; the believers in the Trinity proceeded to teach what they called the Divinity of Christ, declaring that he claimed to be God, and was so considered to be by his disciples. And, in proof of this, they quoted various texts, taken here and there, without much regard to their connection. One very favorite passage was that in which the Jews accused him of making himself God because he called himself son of God. The argument was that, since the Jews understood him to say that he was God, he must have meant so to be understood.

This argument has always seemed to me rather weak. The Jews accused him of meaning to call himself God when he only called himself son of God. Therefore, he must have meant to call himself God; for how could the Jews be mistaken? To this, the answer would seem to be very simple. They were prejudiced and captious, disposed to find fault, and to pervert the meaning of *all* that he said. They accused him of saying that he would destroy the temple; they accused him of saying that he would give them his flesh to eat in a literal sense. In the same way, they accused him of making himself God, when he had said he was the son of God. If they perverted and misinterpreted his language on these other occasions, why may they not have also misinterpreted it on this occasion?

Having thus agreed with the Jews who charged Jesus with making himself God, the early Trinitarians

did not explain what they meant by this statement. If you say that Jesus is a divine being, if you say that I must call him God, the first thing to be done is to explain what you mean by it. If you do not explain it, you are using words of wind, you are beating the air. When you ask me to say that the man, Christ Jesus, is the supreme God, you are bound, before all things. to tell me how he is the supreme God. It is not what we say, but what we mean, that is important. Is he divine in the sense in which all nature is divine, all life divine, the soul of man divine, truth, beauty, justice, love divine? When you say that Jesus was divine, do you mean that God was with him; that he was led, inspired, upheld by God; that God was revealed in his life, his words, his works? If so, we understand what it means, and we can accept that meaning. We believe so, too.

But this explanation was not enough to satisfy the old Trinitarians. They declared that it was not enough to say that "God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but that we must say that Christ is God, co-equal with the Father, co-eternal, the Supreme Being, Maker and Ruler of the boundless universe.

Then, again, we are obliged to ask what is meant by saying that Jesus Christ is God; that he, this person, Jesus, is God? The person is indicated by the personal pronouns "I," "he," "me," "him." Where does Jesus say, "I am God"; "I am equal with God"; "I am infinite in power, wisdom, goodness: I am the Supreme Being"? He says, on one occasion, "My Father is greater than I." Here the personal Jesus

is declared by himself to be inferior to God. On another occasion, he says, "I can do nothing of myself." Again, he says, "I am not alone: the Father is with me,"—distinguishing his person from that of his Father. He, the personal Christ, suffered; but God cannot suffer. He was tempted, but God cannot be tempted. He prayed to God, but God cannot pray to himself. He was ignorant of the day and hour of his own coming, but God knows everything. He increased in knowledge and wisdom, in favor with God and man; but God, who is the All-perfect Being, cannot increase and grow, and become more and more in favor with himself. Christ died on the cross, but God cannot die. For such reasons, the Unitarians thought it improper to say that Christ was God, and declined doing so.

Nevertheless, it is no doubt true that the Scripture teaches a most intimate union between Jesus, the man, and the Infinite Spirit,—union, but not identity,—such a union as was probably never asserted of any other human being. I think no one but Jesus ever said, "I and my Father are one"; "He who has seen me has seen the Father"; "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "All power is given unto me, in heaven and earth." No doubt, these great words assert an intimate relation between Christ and God, explained by himself to mean such a relation as also might exist between his disciples and himself. If he has all power, it is *given* to him, he receives it from God. He declares that he can do nothing of himself. Nevertheless, we must always come back to this: that in the personal consciousness

of Jesus there existed a conviction of his intimate relation with his Father, which sets him by himself in the history of religion.

After all, then, the main question between Unitarians and Trinitarians is almost reduced to a question of words. It is a matter, not of religion, but of logic, — of the proper use of language. It is not "What shall we believe?" but "How shall we express our belief?"

It is evident that, when Unitarians and Trinitarians study the character of Jesus, they must see nearly or quite the same things: the same revelations of divine beauty, truth, love, come before the minds of both. They both read the Sermon on the Mount, the story of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son, the pathos of the Garden of Gethsemane, and the last conversation with the disciples. In these words, in these scenes, God draws near to man. The infinite tenderness shines through the human soul as the sunlight passes through clear glass. The human soul of Jesus is the glass: the sun that shines through him is God. The poet Herbert says: —

> "A man who looks on glass,
> On it may stay his eye;
> Or, if he pleases, through it pass,
> And so the heaven espy."

When we stay our eye on the glass, we see the man Christ Jesus, the Son of Man; when we look through him, we see God. Trinitarians, dwelling on the divine light which shines through him, say, "He is God." Unitarians think it more logical, and also more Scriptural to say, "God is in him."

It is chiefly a question of words, of logic. Certainly, as such, it is not unimportant. But it is not a question of religion. Religion consists in the vision of divine truth and beauty, not the way in which we afterward talk about what we have seen. And, unless we have that personal vision of God, all the arguments of theologians and of the most powerful discourses are only sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. A man may come into the pulpit, and speak with the tongue of a prophet or an angel. He may terrify us into believing, by pictures of future woe and a day of judgment, but the fear thus created by another's words is not religion. Jesus blessed the faith of Peter, because flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father in heaven. It was not hearsay faith, not lazy acquiescence in any popular theology, but the honest utterance of what Peter saw and felt in his own soul.

Nevertheless, there are two fundamental laws concerning Christ and his divinity which have divided the Christian world, and divide it still. The first we will call the metaphysical view of Christ's divinity, the other the moral view of his divinity. The metaphysical view was most widely held in the earliest ages: the moral view prevails more extensively now. I will attempt to describe them and to compare them.

During about four hundred years, from the year 300 to 700 of our era, the sharpest controversies raged around the questions concerning the nature of Christ. Six different discussions distracted the Church during this period, and six doctrines were finally decided to be heretical. These were the Sabellian, Arian, Nestorian, Eutychian, Monophysite, and Mono-

thelitic. All referred to the transcendental or metaphysical nature of Christ,— not what Christ is to us, not what he shows us of God, not how he mediates divine truth and reveals divine love, but what Christ is in his essential being. What the majority finally accepted became orthodox, and was put into the creeds of the Church. The majority condemned the Sabellians for considering the Father, Son, and Spirit as three forms of the same being; they condemned the Arians for saying that Christ was a created being, the Nestorians for making too much of a distinction between the two natures of Christ, the Eutychians for making too little of the distinction, the Monophysites for saying there was only one nature in Christ, the Monothelites for saying there was only one will. After all these heresies had been condemned, one by one, the opinions of the majority were finally summed up in the Athanasian Creed, which gives the whole metaphysics of the Trinity, defines the nature of the Deity in all its details, and ends by denouncing eternal damnation as the unquestionable doom of all who do not accept its unintelligible definitions. As some creatures which belonged mostly to a fossil age have a few living representatives still, so this Athanasian Creed, which belongs to the Palæozoic period of Christianity, survives in the Liturgy of the Church of England.

This metaphysical notion of Christ's divinity still remains, and is in the orthodox creeds. Meantime, a very different and, as it seems to me, much higher view has grown up, and is daily becoming more the faith of the Church. This I call the moral view of the divinity of Jesus. I distinguish the two as follows.

The first view of Christ's divinity ascribes to him all the infinite perfections of the Supreme Being. It calls him co-equal and co-eternal with the Father,— omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent,— God by his nature, God in his person. It asserts that the man Christ Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was the eternal God, without beginning or end; that the Christ who lived, taught, suffered, and died in Palestine was the omnipresent being who sustains the myriad suns and stars throughout the universe. It claims a titular divinity for him; asserts that we must call him God, or that he will be offended, as some foolish men are offended, if their titles are not given them. It makes him divine because of a mysterious and unintelligible divinity of nature and substance, not because of a divinity of character. His divinity is not the divine goodness which can be seen and loved in his life and character, but some dark background of being which must be believed and confessed, though it cannot be understood. This is the metaphysical view of the divinity of Christ.

The moral view teaches us that Christ is divine, because we see in his character a manifestation of the character of God, in his goodness a revelation of divine goodness, in his hatred of sin a type of God's displeasure with evil, in his tenderness to the sinner the evidence of God's forgiving love.

And, now, what brings us nearer to God? What seems to us the most divine thing in the universe? I stand in awe before the vast mystery of creation. I look out on the innumerable worlds which roll through space, and am amazed at the thought that these millions of stars, with all their planets, are but the borders

of that infinite universe which is everywhere filled, moved, sustained by God. Each of these suns, with all its attendant planets, is in rapid motion, each moving carefully along its invisible path, each obeying a divine law. Some Great Power holds all in the hollow of his hand, some mighty command guides these terrific forces, so that no one interferes with any other; and the result is safe order, majestic peace. In all this, I see Divine Power.

From the heavens, I come down to the earth. Here I see innumerable adaptations, wonderful varieties, all consenting to progress, growth, life. Infinite tribes of living creatures people land, sea, and air. Each has its home, its food, its occupation, each its instinct or intellect which guides it, each its pleasures and activities. By some all-penetrating laws, they are kept in their spheres. They come and go, live and die. Each little infusorial creature, examined under the microscope, has its subtle organization, its delicate limbs, feelers, senses. "These all wait on Thee, and thou givest them their food in due season; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." In all this, I see and reverence divine wisdom.

I come to man. I see in every part of the world human beings made for growth and development. I observe the joy of childhood everywhere the same, the happy love of youth and maiden, the delightful activity of work, the satisfaction of knowledge, the triumph of success. And I notice also that in all lands and times man has been taught by some divine instinct to look up out of the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal. He looks out of his little earthly day into

some heavenly world, and adores God, calling him Brahma or Boodh, Amun-Ra, Zeus, or Jupiter. Whatever the name, he believes in higher beings to whom he can pray, and who will hear his prayer. He looks out of the anguish of bereavement to the bliss of reunion. He looks across the river of death to some high immortality and peace. Conscious of sin, he believes in a forgiving love. He is made strong to endure; he is enabled to cling to truth and right; he is lifted above himself by mighty convictions. He is enabled to obey the awful voice of conscience, to renounce selfish desires, and become generous. He devotes himself to his country, and goes out to die in her cause. He is able patiently to endure misrepresentation and calumny in obeying the truth. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, made strong within by some divine faith. Whence comes to him this power of righteousness? God, when he created man, put into him this seed of virtue, making him like himself in thus giving him something of his own image. Thus, in these higher qualities of the human soul, we find God, and see something more than his power or his wisdom: we see also his love. He has made us to share his own highest blessedness, the bliss of becoming capable of gracious goodness.

Now, in all that we thus see of God, which is the most divine element? Is it power? is it wisdom? or is it his goodness? Is not goodness the most divine thing we can see in the universe?

Man, we are told in the Old Testament, was "made in the image of God." The New Testament tells us

that we are "partakers of the divine nature." We are in the image of God, because we are spiritual beings, endowed with reason, with active power, and with moral sentiments. All are divine, but which is most divine?

I see wonderful power of will in great conquerors, like Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon. The mass of men are dazzled by this kind of glory. They bow before a great general, a strong man, who has shown energy of will. This worship of outward success and military ability seems to me dangerous, because of the great danger of making military success the highway to dignity, affluence, and honor.

I ask again, If power is divine, is not there something more divine? What brings us nearest to God? It has been permitted us in our day to see men and women giving themselves to some great human good, something which promised them none of the rewards of this world. Some have devoted themselves to breaking the chains of the slave, and by their long labors four millions of men have risen out of bondage into freedom. We have seen others consecrating their lives cheerfully to help the prisoner, the insane, the poor, the blind, the deaf and dumb, to open the blind eyes, to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. They have labored for education, for peace, for human improvement; to bring comfort to the homes of the poor; to provide hospitals for the sick. We have seen Livingstone wearing out health and life among the savage tribes of Africa to bring to them the knowledge of a Saviour's love. Which has shown us most of God,—the men of intellect and

power — the orators, writers, statesmen, generals whom fame attends — or those men and women whose lives were full of the simple desire to do good to their fellow-men?

Goodness is the highest, the most divine thing we know. Thank God, the world is full of it. It is not to be found solely in the missionary and philanthropist. The best goodness is that we have seen in quiet homes, — silent, unpretending, ever faithful, always sure. It is the goodness of conscientious lives, of upright conduct, of unfaltering integrity. It is the goodness of humility, affection, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, generosity.

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
> The charities which soothe and bless and save
> Are scattered round the feet of men like flowers."

If we have any faith in God, any love for him, it has come to us, I think, not chiefly from books or sermons, but from the sight of good fathers and mothers, noble friends, innocent children. Every trait of purity has revealed to us something of the holiness of God. Every act of self-sacrificing generosity has taught us to believe in the divine love. By the goodness we have seen, we come to believe in the goodness of him whom we have not seen.

And, now, Jesus Christ stands before the world as its highest example of all this goodness. Deny his miracles, if you please, criticise the letter of the Gospels as much as you can, you cannot deny that the life of Jesus as shown in the Gospels has filled the world with a new form of goodness, higher than any before

known. He is the ideal in all our souls of the noblest purity. He is the image in our minds of self-denying love. He has taught the world to call God "Father!" He has made forgiveness of injuries, love of enemies, devotion to mankind, seem possible. He has shown us the most angelic loftiness of soul stooping to the lowliest offices of love. If all human virtue is a revelation of God, is not this, then, the highest of all revelations? He who has seen this life and love has seen the Father. His elevation of soul makes him the image of the invisible God, the first-born of the creation. This is his true divinity,— not any mysterious and metaphysical consubstantiality of nature, but the actual fact that he does reveal to us the divine love, and make it a reality to our hearts.

Theologians who belong to the new period of larger thought may be Trinitarians or Unitarians. But they know that this difference is a question of logic, not religion. It is like the question of meats of which Paul treats: "I know that there is nothing clean or unclean in itself." The Lord Jesus, Paul said, had persuaded him so. He had shown him, by his own teaching, that what goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man. But Paul would not offend a brother by disputes on this point. I am a Unitarian, my brother is a Trinitarian. Each of us will keep his opinion. But we know that our opinions and our statements are not faith. Our faith consists in seeing God and trusting in him.

The modern Church is thus getting rid of its sectarian rancor, its narrow bigotry, its theological bitterness, by rising to a higher plane of thought. The in-

nocuous lightning flashes far below our feet. The storms rage in a region lower down. This is the way in which the prayer of Jesus will be fulfilled, and the Church become one: "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Until the Church ceases from its small disputes, the world will not be converted to the Master. Sectarians will continue to wrangle and debate, but serious thinkers will take another way. They will try to find points wherein they agree, not those where they differ. They will see what truth there is on both sides, and will accept it. So, by degrees, war will cease in the Church, and the Church be one. And then there will be a chance for the world also to have peace, nations to have peace, social life to have peace, and Christ to reign, the Prince of Peace; and the angels once more may chant their hymn of praise, and thank God that there is peace among men.

It is not what we think about Christ, or what we say about Christ, that avails anything, but what we see of God in him,—and still more what we see and feel and do about Christ. He has said that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will condemn those who listened to his words and did not repent. He has said that many will come from the east and west to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom are cast out. There is probably many a free religionist with a minimum of intellectual faith in his head, who is more of a true Christian than some great preacher who is dealing

damnation round the land against the enemies of God. "For not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

To believe in the divinity of Christ, then, is not to hold this or that opinion concerning him, but to see his truth as divine, and obey it; to see his character as divine, and imitate it; to see his spirit as divine, and to partake of it.

Jesus was very lonely in this world. No one understood him. He sought, in every way, to teach his disciples; but they continued very ignorant. He longed for sympathy and affection, and his disciples deserted him at the first alarm. But, though lonely, he was not alone; for the Father was with him. He rested always on that divine heart. This was part of the divinity of Jesus, that he always trusted in his Father's love, and leaned on that in the darkest hour.

We, also, are lonely in this world: all of us are more or less lonely. There are hours in which we seem entirely left to ourselves. There are times in which we say, "No man cares for my soul." Then, if we can trust in God, as Jesus trusted him, and can lean on that infinite tenderness, we really see what was divine in Jesus, though we may never have made up our mind about his nature, or essence, or rank in the universe; though we have not even called ourselves by his name, or said to him, "Lord! Lord!" in any sense whatever.

When Jesus was in the world, he went among publicans and sinners. He said to the sinful, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." He was a channel of God's forgiving love to his children. He spoke

peace to the souls broken by remorse, sunk in doubt, who were without God and hope in the world. He thus became the Mediator of heavenly peace.

We, also, are conscious of sin. We all have temptations which easily beset us, some of one sort, some of another. There are hours in which we feel that we have gone so far astray that we can never return. Many persons who never use the word sin, or say they are sinners, are yet tormented by their consciences, are never contented with themselves, are never quite at peace within. Life goes hard with them; duty is a burden, a perpetual struggle. Then, if we can see the divine fatherly compassion which Jesus has revealed, if we can look at the face of the Father, and say, "My Father, help me, save me, forgive me my sin, and make me strong to do my work," we truly see the divinity of Christ; for God comes to us through him, to give us rest, comfort, and peace.

And so, amid the sorrows and bereavements of this earth, we see the divinity of Jesus, when we see God as he saw him,—the Universal Providence, without whom not a sparrow drops dead on the ground. Then, in the midst of death, we believe in life; in the midst of disaster and disappointment, we have confidence that all things are right and good. We look up, and take our Father's hand, and are led by him.

We have faith in what was most divine in Jesus, when we do what he says. "Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things I say?" Whoever devotes himself to helping his fellow-men has the truest faith in all that was most divine in Jesus. Christianity, according to Jesus, consists in loving God with all our

heart and our neighbor as ourselves. All worship of God must lead to the service of man. All true prayer to God consists in seeking strength, light, love, peace, from him, that we may use it for others. And Christ is truly divine to us when he leads us into this service of his Father.

This view relieves us of all useless and pernicious anxiety about our theology. So long as men thought that their spiritual safety depended on correct opinion, they could have no peace; for no one can ever be certain that his opinions are the truest. They also soon ceased to think for themselves, and let their clergyman think for them. There is a book called *Margaret Percival* written by an English High Church writer, which illustrates this. The heroine is an English churchwoman, but meets a Roman Catholic priest, who tells her she will be lost forever, if she does not become a Roman Catholic. Thereupon, she is about to join the Roman Catholic Church, when her uncle, an English rector, arrives, and tells her she will be guilty of the sin of schism, and will be lost forever, unless she stays in the Church of England. The priest threatens her with damnation, if she does not come; her uncle threatens her with endless perdition, if she does. She finally stays where she is, not from conviction, but because she is there, and because blind repose is no more dangerous than blind change. Here the book ends, with this lame and impotent conclusion. But I believe there is a supplement, called *Margaret Percival in America*, in which she is led to see that a person may be a Christian in all churches and all theologies; because Christianity is not an opinion nor a profession, but a life.

Thus, whenever Jesus brings us to God, he is divine to us, in the highest and best way, the way he himself would most desire. He said that he did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and give his life to break the chains of sin and set the oppressed free. Nor did he come to claim high honors or demand a high seat in the universe, or a great name above all other names. He humbled himself, and was exalted. He made himself of no reputation, and has become the object of human worship. When I hear men saying that we shall offend Jesus if we do not call him God, and that he will refuse to save us unless we accept some theory of his nature, I say sadly, "How little you know the Christ of the Gospels!" What did he care for rank or title, for honor and position? His great glory is that he was willing to be despised and rejected, to be misunderstood and avoided, if only he could bring the world to God, and help men to see the Father as he saw him. He never wished men to say, but to do.

If we see God in Christ, then we do what he desires. He would willingly be forgotten, so that his Father be remembered. Constantly, he asserts, concerning his word and works, that it is not he who does and speaks, but the Father who dwells in him. Jesus is most divine when thinking least of his divinity, just as a perfect object-glass in a telescope is not seen itself, but shows us the infinite heavens.

Let others, then, honor Jesus by calling him God: we will give him the honor dearest to his heart by seeing God revealed in his life. Let others explain as well as they can the metaphysics of his divinity: we

will be led by him to his Father and our Father, his God and our God. Let others teach that he is the omniscient being: enough for us that he knows our needs, our sorrows, our sins, and has known how to bring us comfort and peace. Let others talk of his omnipotence: we will rejoice that he has power on earth to forgive sins, to reveal God's truth to babes, to undo the heavy burden, to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light. This was the divinity which he himself claimed. He did not say, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because I am the second person in the Trinity," but he said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty those that are bruised."

Let us thank God that the metaphysical divinity of Christ is passing out of men's minds, and that his moral divinity is being better known and loved by all sects of Christians. In the early centuries, the streets of Alexandria and Antioch ran red with the blood of Christians, killing each other because of their difference of opinion in regard to the nature of Christ or of the Trinity. We have risen above this. A few hundred years ago, any one who questioned the scholastic doctrine of the Trinity would be put to death in England. Because Servetus, a great man and a reformer, denied the doctrine of the Trinity as held by Calvin, Calvin used his influence to have him burnt at the stake with the most barbarous cruelty, Calvin himself acting the part of informer, prosecutor, and judge. Such power did the metaphysical doctrine have within a few hundred years.

The true Christ, the Son of God, is no metaphysical doctrine, but a brother, a friend, a human being like ourselves, so full of divine light and love as to be the best manifestation we have of the Living God. Not Nature in all her majesty and beauty so reveals the Creator as the divine life of the Son of Man. Well might angels sing at his birth, Glory to God and peace to men!

The man Christ Jesus, this purely human brother of ours, became the Son of God by entire obedience and perfect trust. To him, God was always Father and Friend; and, by living in that spirit, he helps us all to become also the sons of God.

He has no glory that he would not gladly share with us all. He desires no title of honor that he would not give to his brethren. This is his highest honor, to have desired no exclusive honor. Because he humbled himself, and became the servant of all men, God has highly exalted him. But he tells us that all who humble themselves, to do good, will be exalted also. The name which is above every name is the name he wishes us all to share with him. And, therefore, we may well keep Christmas with joy; for it is the birthday of our best friend, our dearest helper, our elder brother, the head of the household of mankind, who is most divine because he is so human, and who, more than any other, brings us near to the infinite love of God, and reveals God to us as our Father and Inspirer; "Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and End."

IS PROBATION OR EDUCATION THE END OF LIFE?

In a number of the *Independent*, a liberal orthodox newspaper, there was a full report of the examination (by an installing council) of Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth, who was about to be settled over a church in New Haven. This report contained Dr. Smyth's statement of faith in regard to the main doctrines of Christianity, and his answers to questions put to him by members of the council. Dr. Smyth was appointed Professor of Theology at Andover, and was rejected by the Board of Visitors on the ground that, though he might be sufficiently orthodox, he had an unfortunate mode of expressing himself. To many persons, his language sounded as if he were a heretic.

Dr. Newman Smyth may be considered to represent an advanced and advancing stage of theological development. He is, to a certain extent, liberal and progressive. He does not believe that man is "capable of formulating a perfect system of truth." He is not satisfied with any of the orthodox theories of the atonement, and prefers, like Dr. Bushnell, some view which lays the main stress on the moral and spiritual influence of Christ's work. He also believes in the

possibility, at least, of repentance and faith in the other life for those who have had no adequate opportunity here. Nor does he adhere to any Orthodoxy of the past or present as perfect, but wishes "to press on toward the full and final Orthodoxy of the kingdom of God." His only statement in regard to the Trinity is that he believes "in one God existing in three eternal distinctions of being."

So far, Dr. Smyth is a liberal theologian. But he still clings to ideas which may be regarded as essentially orthodox. He looks on the Bible as containing a special and supernatural revelation from God, and thinks that Christ's death was somehow a vicarious atonement. He believes in the possibility of everlasting sin, and consequently of everlasting punishment, and sees no ground for teaching, even as a hope, the final reconciliation of all evil by the power of divine love. The result of it all seems to be that he holds to an imperfect Orthodoxy, but to a still more imperfect liberal Christianity.

But what struck my attention most in this report, and which I would chiefly examine now, is the stress everywhere laid, both by Dr. Smyth and his examiners, on the notion of probation. They all agree that man is placed in this world by God to pass through a probation; to be tried and tested, in order to see if he is fit to be saved. Dr. Smyth says, "I believe that this world-age is the time of probation, and that every person born into this world shall have one fair and sufficient probation, under conditions of grace"; and that "the end of probation is, for the individual, his confirmed self-determination for good or evil." It is

possible, he says, that some persons, "as infants, idiots, antediluvians, etc.," may not have had a sufficient probation here, and that God will then provide them one hereafter. But each person will have one, and only one, "decisive probation." He is to be tried once, and only once, either in this world or the next; and the result of that trial is to be a condemnation to everlasting death and despair, or an acquittal to everlasting life and peace.

Now, here, it seems to me, we have indicated one distinction between the old and new theologies,— that of the past and that of the future. The old theology regards man as being sent into this world as a place of probation: the new theology looks on life as a place of education. According to one, it is a court-house; according to the other, a school. Orthodoxy says man is placed here to be tried for his life: Rational Christianity says he is put here to be educated for a higher life. Let us look at these two systems of thought, to see which accords most with Scripture, reason, and experience.

According to Orthodoxy,— even the most advanced Orthodoxy,— this life is essentially a place of probation. Man decides here his eternal destiny. "The end of probation," says Dr. Smyth, "is for the individual his confirmed self-determination in good or evil." If this takes place here, it is doubtless the most essential thing which does take place here. If I am told, "To-morrow, you are to be tried for your life," I must doubtless consider this the most important event which can happen to me to-morrow. If I am told that during my earthly existence the question is to be settled of

my infinite bliss or unbounded despair hereafter, this is surely the most important question in my present life. Pleasure, culture, science, art, education, usefulness to others, philanthropic enterprises, patriotic efforts, the affections of home, are all as nothing in comparison with this. If life is really a place of probation, then everything else here is insignificant and worthless in comparison. Moreover, until this matter is settled, the chief attention of every sensible man must and ought to be directed on himself. He is bound to think chiefly about his own condition. It is idle to ask him to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. Can you ask a man struggling for life in deep water to turn his attention from his own safety to the goodness of God or to the welfare of his fellow-men? This view necessitates self-love as the chief duty until our salvation is secured. It is not necessary to indicate how foreign this is from the ethics of Jesus.

What, then, is meant by saying that life is a period of probation? It means that the question is to be tried whether we are fit for heaven and eternal joy or only fit for hell and eternal woe. Our trial consists in having the opportunity of repenting of our sins and accepting Christ as our Saviour. Wherever this opportunity is offered, men are on trial. If they accept the offer, judgment is given in their favor; if not, it is given against them. There may be some persons to whom the offer is not made in this world, and Mr. Smyth thinks it will be made to them hereafter. To this extent, his heresy goes, but no further.

What reason is there for believing that life is a

probation such as New England Orthodoxy assumes it to be? The word "probation" is not to be found in our Bible, nor is the idea there. Where in the Old or New Testaments is it said that life is a scene of probation? No doubt, the idea of trial is there. But what is it? It is the trial which tests our faith and our sincerity, shows a man to himself, enables him to see what his weakness is, where he is liable to fall, and so makes him humble, watchful, prayerful. It is a trial which bears its fruits in time, not in eternity; which makes a man better, and is a part of his earthly education. Sometimes, it takes the form of temptation, to which we may yield or which we may conquer. The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness was his trial, and helped to fit him for his great work. Being thus tempted or tried, he became able to succor those who are similarly tempted.

There are two Greek phrases in the New Testament which express the idea of this proof, trial, or probation. One is *dokimazo*, with its derivatives; the other, *peira*, *peirazo*, *peirasmos*. The first term is used in such passages as this: "The fire shall try [or prove] every man's work, what it is"; "Let a man examine [or try] himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup." Another instance is where Paul asked the Corinthians to give to the poor Christians at Jerusalem, "that I might prove the sincerity of your love." "Walk as children of the light, proving what it is which is acceptable to the Lord." This kind of probation is whatever tests men's character and conduct here, and shows what is in them, and has nothing to do with a future world. Even God is said to be tried in the

same way. "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works." That is to say, the conduct of the Jews showed, or revealed, to them the character of God. I said that the word "probation" did not occur in the Bible. It is not to be found in the authorized version; but, in the new revised translation, it occurs in one passage, in which in the old version it is said that "tribulation works patience; patience, experience; and experience, hope." The revisers have it, "Patience works probation, and probation hope." But all this certainly occurs in the present life.

The other Greek term is frequently translated temptation, occasionally trial. It is sometimes said to be a trial from God, sometimes a temptation from our own desires; now a trial to be shunned, and now one to be welcomed. But, whether a temptation or a trial, it is something which acts on our character here, and has its work here. The language, then, of the Bible does not support the thought that this life is a place of probation, in the orthodox sense. We are not put on trial, and examined to see whether or not we are fit to be admitted into heaven. Nor is this the teaching of Jesus or his apostles. It is the kingdom of God in this world which they proclaim. John did not say, "Repent, that ye may enter heaven hereafter," but "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," here and now. The "kingdom of heaven" of which Jesus spoke was the reign of God on this earth,—the truth and love of God in men's hearts and lives. He taught us to pray every day, "Thy kingdom come: thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Instead of preaching that this life is a trial which is

to decide whether we are fit for a future heaven or a future hell, Jesus and the apostles taught that God's truth and love had been manifested to make us live soberly, righteously, and lovingly in this present world.

According to Orthodoxy, man has offered to him once, and perhaps only once, in this world, the salvation of his soul. If he accepts it, he is safe; if he rejects it, he is forever lost. This is his probation. As long as life lasts, he may be able to accept the offer; after death, he will have no other opportunity. And the test is this: Does he accept or reject Jesus Christ as his Saviour? for he can be saved from his sins in no other way than by faith in Christ as the atonement for his sins.

We have seen how little foundation there is in Scripture for this view of human life. Does it accord any better with reason? Is it reasonable that there should be such a probation? What is it for? Is this trial for the sake of God, to enable him to know what the character of each man is? He knows it without any such trial. Is it for the sake of man? What good can come to him from knowing what he is, when it is too late to alter?

This doctrine, that man's life is a scene of probation, seems to be taken from human needs and human imperfections. When we make a machine, we have to try it to find out whether it will work. We put it on probation. Watches are tested, guns are tested, ships' compasses are tested, before we use them. A steamer has its trial trip before it is allowed to cross the Atlantic. A railroad bridge is tested by the weight of

a heavy train before it is opened for travel. There are in Boston inspectors of milk, of provisions, of buildings, and the like. But this is owing to our imperfect knowledge. God does not need to put us on probation; for he has made us, and knows what is in us. Probation is a purely human conception, based on human weakness and ignorance, and cannot apply to the Almighty.

Nor is it in accordance with the fatherly character of God, which Jesus has revealed to mankind. What sort of a father would he be who should say to his children: "I will give you so many months or years in which you shall be on probation. Those of you who conform to my laws and fulfil the conditions I lay down, I will take with me to a pleasant home I have prepared, to live with me as my children. Those who fail I will reject, and have no more to do with them. I will cast them off forever." The conditions might be ever so reasonable, but we would certainly say that this conduct is not that of a father. It certainly is not like the conduct of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

But it is said: "Does not the Scripture speak of a judgment to come,—a judgment in which all are to be rewarded or punished according to their works? Is it not said that for every idle word that men shall speak they must give an account in the day of judgment? Are we not taught that the Son of Man is to be the judge of all mankind, and that the Father hath committed all judgment to him? And does not this show that this life is a scene of probation, which is to end in a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by

Jesus Christ? And is not this right, because, in this world, men blind themselves to their own character and deceive themselves as to their conduct, so that it is necessary that the truth shall be revealed, and that they shall see themselves as they are, and God as he is?"

Yes: we all need a day of judgment. We deceive ourselves and are deceived by others as to what is right. We do not know ourselves as we are, and we need that knowledge. But, then, let us remember that these judgments are not always deferred to the next world. They are taking place here, and taking place all the time. It has been well said that "the history of the world is the perpetual day of judgment." We must put aside the notion of a great assize at the end of the world, of the trumpet sounding and the dead rising, of a vast collection of mankind in one place, of Jesus sitting on a throne, of the sheep going to the right and the goats to the left. All this is the picturesque form, the figurative dress of the inward truth. It belongs to the letter, not to the spirit. Though it is said that the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, yet Jesus himself says elsewhere, "I came not to judge the world, but to save it"; and "If any man hears me not, I judge him not; but the word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

In fact, the last day, the day of judgment, comes to each of us whenever there is a judgment of God. The day of judgment "cometh, and now is." It comes now to nations, to institutions, to creeds, to religions, to customs, to the individual soul. When the Jews rejected Jesus, the Messiah of truth and love, and pre-

ferred the Messiah of outward power and glory, that was their day of judgment: the Temple was then doomed to fall, and its worship to cease. When Paganism rejected Christianity, it sentenced itself, and died. When the Roman Catholic Church rejected the Reformation, that was its day of judgment.

So it is with nations, so it is with individuals. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The present hour is the day of judgment for us all. At every call of truth to which we listen or to which we are deaf, we go to the right or to the left. When any duty comes to us, and, though it be hard, we accept it, a voice says in our soul, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When we postpone obedience, and excuse ourselves, and disobey the voice within, we are the goats going to the left. In every such crisis or judgment (for crisis means judgment, and the critical moments of life are those which sentence us),—in every such crisis, we go away into eternal suffering or eternal life. These judgments on the soul are immediate, incessant; and they are sent to show us what we are, to show us our weakness and our strength,— to rebuke, to warn, to comfort, to encourage,—in short, to educate us for time and eternity.

Perhaps it will be said: "There are probations in this world which decide a man's fitness for future success and enjoyment. Boys have a probation at school: if they pass it well, their future position is made secure." No doubt; but does a good father give his son only one probation, only a single opportunity? Does he make his child's whole destiny,

even for this life, depend on a single trial? And will God make our whole everlasting joy or misery, ages on ages, to rest on the question whether we have once, in this life, in our folly or our ignorance, rejected an offer of mercy made through Christ? If we, being evil, know how to be better than that, shall not our heavenly Father be infinitely more merciful than we? I believe, then, in probation, but in innumerable probations,— many in this life, and many more, perchance, in the life to come.

This sort of probation is not preparation for a future judgment; but it is a perpetual judgment, and, therefore, a perpetual education. "The trial of faith worketh patience, and patience worketh experience, and experience hope." To use the favorite language of our time, it is the process of evolution, by which passion is tempered, desires chastened, the love of truth unfolded, generosity developed, sympathy with the welfare of others awakened, the power of relieving the woes of others gradually learned. As youth passes into age, life teaches these lessons whenever the soul is open to receive them. It brings us nearer to God. We pass from the idea of God enthroned above us, a King, a Judge, a Sovereign Ruler, to that of a divine presence, a benign providence, a perpetual care, an all-surrounding love. We believe in God as the vast mystery hidden below all things, and yet the great revelation made through all things. He is all we see and all we know. He is outside of everything, embracing the whole universe; inside of everything, giving existence and being to the whole universe Wherever there is life, there is he. Wherever the

solemn shadow of death falls, there is his benign power and presence equally near. Our beloved dead are in his arms. Our hopes rest on the foundation of his love. Without God, we are without hope. But, believing in him as an all-loving Father, we know that all things which seem evil must work together for good.

> "We dimly guess from blessings known
> Of greater out of sight,
> And, with the chastened psalmist, own
> His judgments, too, are right."

One failure of Christians in the past, and largely in the present, is their inability to rise to the highest conception of the true and living God. The doctrine of probation, as set forth in the New Haven Council, puts the divine Friend of man outside of the world, as a being who stands apart from our lives, giving us a single chance, and then waiting to see if we will accept it. This view of God is too cold, too distant. Its tendency is to drive men from him. No doubt, those who believe that their own salvation is sure may regard God as their friend. But even they cannot have that implicit and perfect confidence in his love and care which belongs to the soul which can say as Jesus said, "Our Father." It is a great deal to be able to say, "My Father." But it is a great deal more to say, "Our Father." Then we are able to see the deep meaning of the prophet when, speaking in the name of Jehovah, he said, "All souls are mine."

When we feel that every creature is dear to God, that all are cared for by his special providence, that no child ever is or ever can be disinherited by him, there

will come to us all a much more serene confidence in the heavenly Father. So long as we think that some of his children are to be forever lost, to escape permanently from his care and his love, to be outcasts forever and forever, we must doubt either the power or the goodness of God. Either God is not able to save them or is not willing to save them. Our faith in him is, therefore, imperfect,—not full, not entire, not absolute. But when we are sure that, sooner or later, "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth," to the divine truth and love; that, "in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he will gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth"; when we are able to believe that all evil will be swallowed up in good; all falsehood, error, and sin conquered, not by force, but by love,— then we shall rise to a loftier elevation of faith than the Church has ever reached. Paul tells us, in a striking passage, that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Jesus, from faith to faith; that is, I suppose, from faith to greater faith. Under the Jewish law, the righteousness of God was revealed in keeping his promises to his chosen people; and they had faith in him as the God keeping his covenant with their fathers. The prophets had a greater faith, for they foresaw a time when the whole earth would be full of the knowledge of God. The righteousness of God was revealed to them as giving a knowledge of himself hereafter to all his human children. Christianity came, and revealed God as righteous in opening the door of salvation to all mankind,— to Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman,

bond and free,—showing that he could be just and yet justify all who believed in Jesus. This was a still greater faith. The faith of the Church thus far has been a trust in God as the Saviour of all Christians, but as leaving the heathen to mere outside possibilities. Dr. Smyth goes so far as to believe that in a few exceptional cases there may be probation in the other world. The Roman Catholic has faith that God will save those inside the true Church. Miss Yonge believes that God will save those who are baptized. Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Moody think he will save those who accept Christ as a Saviour. Such are the degrees of faith in the Church. The Church trusts God in part, not fully. It trusts him under certain conditions. There are few who rise to the height of a perfect confidence that all his creatures are safe in his hands; that not one opportunity only, but countless opportunities, will be given them; and that whoever is in hell, here or hereafter, will be so because he himself chooses to be there, not because God chooses it. Faith will be perfect when we see that law and love are the same; and that probation, punishment, judgment, are only necessary steps in human progress.

The result of what we have said is this: Orthodoxy, even in its most advanced stage, still seems to make the purpose of life probation for a judgment to come. A more rational Orthodoxy will see in it education and development. It will see in God a universal Father, in Christ a human brother, in salvation the steps of progress, in heaven, here and hereafter, the harmony of law and love. Toward this more rational Orthodoxy, the Church and the world are tending; and, in the fulness of time, it must come.

THE SABBATH—SUNDAY—OR THE LORD'S DAY—WHICH?

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest" (or Sabbath keeping) "for the people of God."—HEB. iv., 9.

THROUGH the Jewish nation, God has bestowed on mankind four gifts of supreme importance,—the doctrine of monotheism as taught by Moses, the gospel of love as taught by Jesus, the Bible, and the rest of the seventh day. This day of rest is a peculiar blessing to the poor and to the laboring man. The wealthy can rest when they please; but the poor would have no rest, were it not for the return of this day. One day in seven brings to the hard-working man the opportunity to be with his family at home or walk with them in the fields or parks of the city. The boys and girls rest from school, and their teacher from teaching. The horses rest in their stables, the din of wagons ceases from the streets, the roar of trains is suspended on the railroads, the factories are still, the shops are shut, the hammer of the builder is silent, the steam-engines cease to shriek, the theatres are closed, most of the bar-rooms are shut, and a sense of repose rests on the city and the village. If this were all, what a comfort would it not be! This merely negative blessing is a very great one.

The Jewish Sabbath is so great an advantage to the health of body and mind that Christian nations have adopted it, and established it by law. They have determined that most work shall cease on one day in seven. This was necessary; for there are some things that must be done by all, or they cannot easily be done by any. Unless all would agree to have streets and roads, no one would have them. For the sake of the public good, we must consent to give up some part of our private liberty. If there were no general law forbidding shops to be open on Sunday, courts to be held, post-offices and banks to do business, trades to be carried on, it might be necessary for some to do in self-defence what others do from choice. If my neighbor should run his factory on Sunday, I might be obliged to run mine; and the working people would lose their day of rest. Hence the laws for the observance of the Lord's day.

As to the propriety of such laws, most persons are agreed. It is generally admitted that it is better for the community that business should generally cease one day in seven, and that all business should be suspended on the same day. If nine-tenths of the community were Jews, then Christians should be willing to suspend their business on Saturday. If nine-tenths were Mohammedans, then we ought to agree to suspend business on Friday. But, as in this country the vast majority are Christians, it is proper that business should be suspended on the Lord's day, which is the legal title of the first day of the week. Accordingly, all the States of the Union have laws making contracts entered into on that day void, and ordinary work,

except that of necessity or mercy, unlawful. The question was even raised in Pennsylvania whether a marriage on Sunday was a legal contract; but this was happily decided in the affirmative,— the courts basing their decision on the ground that it was a religious act, for which Sunday was a proper day.

The exception in behalf of works of necessity and mercy has been gradually widening, till it includes some Sunday cars and trains, Sunday newspapers, concerts, steamboat excursions, and other acts which our ancestors would have called Sabbath-breaking. But the practical good sense of the people has shown itself in a wise enlargement and limitation of these exceptions. A few important mails are carried, a few important trains run, the post-offices are opened for an hour or two, museums of art, concerts, and public libraries are opened; but theatres are closed. And these distinctions are not made by legal enactment, but are determined by the controlling power of public opinion. In this State, it was once a question whether a dangerous washing away of the road might be repaired on Sunday. But it was promptly decided that the town not only might, but ought to do it. And, certainly, if even the strictly Sabbatarian Jews would pull an ox or an ass out of a pit on the Sabbath, it must be still more our duty to provide that men and women should not fall into one.

As to these questions there is no great difficulty. It is not hard to decide what *ought not to be done* on Sunday. But how this day ought to be employed is a more difficult and a more important inquiry. There are three general views on this matter,—from the stand-

point of those who look on this day as "the Sabbath," those who consider it as "Sunday," and those who view it as "the Lord's day."

"Sabbath" is the Jewish designation, and implies a Jewish view. Here, as elsewhere, Jewish morality has been negative, narrow, punctilious, saying, "Thou shalt *not* do this," rather than pointing out what ought to be done. The treatise on the Sabbath in the Mishna contains innumerable minute distinctions between what is criminal and what is allowable.

Thus, the Mishna says that a tailor must not take a needle out with him before the Sabbath begins, lest he forget, and continue to carry it during the Sabbath. Nets must not be set for game, unless there is time to catch them before the Sabbath. Drugs must not be immersed in water for dyestuffs, unless the dye will be finished before the Sabbath. Bread must not be put into the oven, unless there is time for a crust to form on it before the Sabbath. A man may put out his lamp on the Sabbath, for fear of robbers, but not to save the oil. He may put food to be cooked, before the Sabbath begins, in an oven heated with stubble, but not in one heated with wood or olive stones. It is lawful to tie some kind of knots on the Sabbath, unlawful to tie others. If a heathen has lighted a candle, an Israelite may use it; but he must not light it himself. A man may verbally count the number of his guests, but he must not read from a written list. There are twenty-four chapters of this treatise, full of such details as these.

This is the character of the Jewish Sabbath, as described in the Talmud,— minutely scrupulous and

timid, conscientious about trifles. But there is not a word in this whole treatise of any spiritual meaning or purpose, any mental or moral refreshment connected with these prescriptions.

But, when we turn to the New Testament, what a change takes place in the point of view! It is given in a single sentence,— "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"; "It is right to do good on the Sabbath day." Jesus walks in the fields with his disciples on the Sabbath day. If he had done that on his own day in New England two hundred years ago, he and his disciples might have been arrested. The Jewish Sabbath disappeared when the Christian Church was founded. It is only once mentioned by Paul in all his Epistles, and then by way of condemnation: "Let no man judge you in regard to new moons and Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come." If the Jewish Christians wished to keep the Sabbath, they might; but it was not compulsory. If they kept the Sabbath on the seventh day as Jews, they kept the first day also as Christians.

The Sabbath, therefore, was no Christian institution at first, and never has been so, except among the Puritans of England and America. They alone retained the name "Sabbath," and applied it to the "Lord's day." In Italy, if one speaks of the Sabbath, he means Saturday; for Saturday is called "Sabbato," and Sunday is called "Domenico," or Lord's day.

I was sorry, therefore, that a convention which once met in our city should have professed as its object to promote a better observance of "the Sabbath." I suppose they did not mean by this that they wished to

promote the religious observance of Saturday. Why, then, give it the Jewish name? Why not give it the Christian name of *the Lord's day?* You may say this is only a question of words, but words are things. Those who call the first day of the week the Sabbath, unconsciously or intentionally, give it a Jewish character. One of the speakers at this convention referred, with apparent approbation, to the spirit of the old New England laws, which punished Sabbath-breaking with fines, imprisonment, and death.

The old New England Sabbath was a day of gloom, not joy; of constraint, not freedom; of fear, not hope. Children must not play, no one must look on God's works in nature, people must pass the whole time either in church or else shut up with their Bibles at home. This method might have been invented by Satan as an ingenious contrivance for making Sunday, the Church, the Bible, and religious exercises distasteful. And yet some of the members of this Sabbath convention spoke as if they really wished that system back again.

We do not want the Sabbath revived; for that was a day of restraint and gloom, and it was dropped by Christianity in the beginning. On the other hand, we do not want a mere Sunday, a pagan and secular holy-day, sanctified by no sense of a divine presence and love. The Continental Sunday goes as far to one extreme as the Puritan Sabbath went to the other. It should not be for mere church-going, on the one hand, nor for mere amusement, on the other. It should rest both the body and the soul, the mind and the heart. It should prepare us to go to our work next day in a

better spirit, with new hope, courage, devotion to principle, faith in God, love to man. The Jewish Sabbath does not do this; for it is too hard, cold, ascetic, forbidding. The pagan Sunday cannot do it. Passing the day idly or lazily does not refresh us, mere empty talk or frivolous amusement does not refresh us. Real recreation is re-creation. It is what puts new life into all our faculties.

We, therefore, wish to have not the Jewish "Sabbath" or the pagan "Sunday," but the Christian "Lord's day." The Lord's day fulfils the Sabbath, taking from it what is good,—its seventh part of the week redeemed from work to rest. It fulfils the "Sunday," taking all that is good of the pagan holiday,—its freedom from heavy obligations, its absence from care, its innocent pleasure. But it fulfils both in something higher: it fulfils the physical rest of the Jewish Sabbath by rest of the soul, by freedom from anxious doubts and fears. It fulfils pagan pleasure by a deeper joy, born of faith, hope, and love.

There are only two passages in the Epistles of the New Testament in which the Sabbath is mentioned,—one in Colossians and one in Hebrews. Paul, in his long letter to Rome, in which he treats the most essential questions of Christian faith and practice, does not so much as mention Sabbaths, Sabbath-keeping, or Sabbath-breaking. In his two letters to Corinth, in which he speaks of so many Christian duties, truths, trials, and in which the whole of the life of the early Church comes visibly before us, Sabbath-keeping is not once mentioned. Nor is it spoken of in his letters to Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, the two to

Timothy, the letter to Titus or Philemon. James does not mention the Sabbath in his one letter, nor Peter in his two, nor John in his three, nor in the Book of Revelation. In Paul's Epistle to Colosse alone, he mentions the Sabbath, there speaking of it as one of the shadows which have passed away, like keeping the feast of the new moon or like the distinction between clean and unclean meats. The modern doctrine, that Sunday is the Sabbath, transferred from the seventh day to the first, is not once alluded to in the New Testament. The other passage is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in our translation reads, "There remains, therefore, a rest to the people of God." In the Greek, it reads, "There remains, therefore, a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God"; that is, to Christians. The doctrine taught is that the Christian rest consists in "ceasing from one's own works"; that is, in ceasing from vain attempts at being good alone, without God, and in the rest of the soul which comes from doing our duties with faith in our hearts, relying not on ourselves, but on the inspiration of our heavenly Father.

This turns the Jewish Sabbath and the pagan Sunday into the Christian Lord's day. The rest of the Lord's day is not outward, but inward,—a rest from anxiety, sorrow, and sin. It is reliance on an infinite care, trust in an infinite Providence, confidence in a fatherly love waiting to forgive us whenever we turn to God. This is the reason for coming to church: that, together, in the company of Christian brethren, we may enter into this peace of God. This is what the Church ought to do for us all. He who conducts the

services should understand that this is the purpose of them; and he should pray to God for power, wisdom, and inspiration of soul, that he may guide all the services to this end. Those who come should come for this. The end of church-going is not to hear arguments and discussions about doctrines, not to listen to a fine essay or to go through a ritual ceremony, but to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, to be bathed once more by the spirit of God, and so enter into rest.

The Jewish Sabbath bristled with minute regulations in regard to what might be done and what ought not to be done. But the Lord's day is not under law, but under grace. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Instead of regulations, we have principles. Whatever refreshes the soul, recreates it, fills it with peace and hope, is right. Whatever leaves it anxious, dispirited, weak, is wrong, even though it is church-going.

I have no doubt there are many cases where to continue to go to a church which gives no peace to the mind or the heart is really breaking the Sabbath, not keeping it. I have known of Unitarians living in some town where all the preaching was so foreign to their convictions and their faith that it only disturbed their soul, and did not refresh it. In such cases, it is better to stay at home than to go to church; for you break the Sabbath, if you continue to go where you find by experience that you lose the rest which is the essential blessing of the Lord's day.

If the Christian Sabbath means inward peace and rest, whatever disturbs that is Sabbath-breaking.

For keeping the Lord's day, we have principles, not rules. Different people need different things. A hard-working man may need some physical rest. It may be a mistake for him to go to church two or three times a day. Indeed, I think that this is too often for most people; yet, if any one finds that three or four religious services really comfort and strengthen him, he is right in attending them. An English bishop has lately said that museums and parks should be opened to the people on Sunday, because a man could not spend the whole day in praying; and it would be far better for him to spend part of the day in a picture-gallery than sitting in a bar-room or asleep at home. This was common sense and true religion in one.

The principle which should govern our use of the day is, So to occupy its hours that they shall lighten the burden of care and refresh us for our coming duties.

The Roman Catholic Church very properly banishes gloom from Sunday, makes it a festival, and forbids it ever to be treated as a fast, even in Lent. My hope is that the day shall be made more sacred, more holy, and at the same time more free. We do not wish it to be steeped in worldly and secular occupations, nor frozen stiff in ritualism. Let us go up higher.

My system for the use of the day would be to divide it into three parts, devoted to these objects: —

In the forenoon, I would have people go to church, there to come near to God, and look up to receive strength and peace from him; and there, also, to come into communion with Christian friends, and feel that all are brothers and sisters. The church should not be a place for doctrinal controversy nor oratory, nor

discussions of questions of politics or finance, but for spiritual life and growth, for looking at the foundations of Christian faith and duty, for communing reverently with the divine Father and eternal Friend.

Again, a part of the day should be devoted to others, — given in some way to the comfort of the lonely, the unhappy, and in providing innocent amusements and recreation for those who cannot have them at other times. Besides those who go to church there is a great outside mass who loiter in the streets. Some of these fill themselves with drink, and their crimes on Sunday fill the Monday morning papers. It should be one part of our way of keeping Sunday to provide innocent Sunday recreations for all persons who need them. It is a grand thing that we have in Boston our Common and Public Garden, our out-door concerts, our Art Museum and Public Library, all open on Sunday. The Young Men's Christian Union is also open on Sunday ; and our friend, Mr. Baldwin, says he would close on any other day sooner than on this. Intelligent and educated men and women might take classes, on Sunday, of young men and young women who had no other time for study in history, art, social science, and the like studies. If the first part of the day is given to strengthening our souls by religious truth, the second part might be given to helping the souls of others.

There remains the evening of the day to be disposed of. And this might be devoted to home, to friends, to social intercourse. Those who have no other time or opportunity might make these evening hours the season for reading aloud in their families, talking with their friends, and making the acquaintance of their children.

I enjoyed, in France and Germany, the sight of family life and friendly intercourse on Sunday,— families strolling together in the public parks, groups of friends walking into the country two or three miles, and taking tea together in the open air. I am glad to see these customs coming in here. So far from being sorry that gardens are opened around the city for the people, I am glad of it. So long as liquor is banished, I am glad to see families going in company into the country on Sunday afternoon. Steamboat excursions down the harbor, if quiet and orderly, do not seem to me bad things. The advantage is that husbands, wives, and children are able to go together for a little fresh air and for the sight of sea and country.

So long as families go together, the effect must be good. I am not afraid that church-going will cease in consequence. I believe that people will always go to church, because they will always feel the need of it and the good of it. It will last, not because it is a custom or a duty, but because it satisfies an everlasting need of the soul.

Therefore, I hope that Christian men and women, in conventions and elsewhere, will not oppose innocent recreation on Sunday, will not endeavor to confine it to religious exercises, or to bring back the old Puritanic Sabbath, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. But let Christian men and women, who have happy homes and every opportunity for recreation on other days, seek to bring suitable pleasure to those whose lives through the week are hard and empty. Let them try to make Sunday a bright and happy day for all,— a day to lift up the soul to God and bring

man nearer to his brother. Let every Sunday sing the angels' song to all human hearts of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

Then we shall better understand Herbert's tender verses to this day: —

"O day! most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud;
. . . . . .
The couch of time, man's balm and bay,
The week were dark but for thy light,
Thy torch doth show the way."

"Thou art a day of mirth;
And, when the week days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
Then let me take thee with a bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both, being tossed from earth,
Fly hand in hand to heaven."

OLD AND NEW VIEWS CONCERNING THE BIBLE.

I WILL next speak of the Bible, and describe and contrast the old and new views of this venerable book. I shall try to show that the broad and human views of the Bible long taught by Unitarians are now largely held by the best scholars and thinkers of all denominations. I would also show that they are higher, nobler, more spiritual, more religious, than the old Orthodoxy. But, before doing this, I will state the facts concerning the Bible in which all agree,— to which all scholars, whether Trinitarians or Unitarians, orthodox or heterodox, would assent.

All, then, agree that the Bible is not *one* book, written at one time and on one subject, but a whole encyclopædia of religious literature. These books were written by some forty different authors, and during a period of at least a thousand years. By whom they were first collected we do not know. At what time they came together we cannot tell. On what principles they were selected is a matter of conjecture. Who the real writers were is doubtful. Their manuscripts have long since perished. The oldest manuscript we have is three hundred years later than the time when the last book of the New Testament was written. Down to the time of the invention of print-

ing, in the fifteenth century, the books of the Bible were copied by hand. The result was that a large number of errors crept in, and we have no means of deciding with certainty what the original text of the Bible was. Our present English version was made by order of King James I., and printed in 1611. Neither the translators were inspired, nor the printers, nor the proof-readers; nor did they possess as good a Hebrew and Greek text from which to translate as we have at present.

These are simple matters of fact, in which all scholars agree, no matter how orthodox they are. On the other hand, all — even the most heretical — whose opinions command our respect, will admit that the collection of Jewish and Christian works which we call the Bible stands at the head of the religious literature of the world. There is no book like it or second to it. All the other sacred books of mankind,— the Vedas, the Kings, the Zend Avesta, the writings of Confucius, the Koran, the Eddas,— however much they may contain of sound truth and moral beauty, are flat and tame when compared to the depth, sweep, variety, picturesque character, and heavenly charm of the books of the Bible. The Book of Job is probably the noblest poem in any literature; the Book of Ruth, by the testimony of such critics as Rousseau and Goethe, is the tenderest idyl; the Book of Ecclesiastes is more terrible in its desperate despair than any tragedy of Æschylus or Shakspere. The stories of patriarchal life in Genesis, and of antique manners in the Book of Kings, surpass even the undying charm of those in Herodotus. The Book of Psalms goes so deeply into

the spiritual experiences of man's nature — his faith, his doubt, his reason, his hope, his tender trust, his ardent aspiration — that it will probably remain the best manual of devotion for the human race. The prophetic literature of the Bible stands absolutely alone, making a class by itself in the productions of human genius. Those strains mount up into the sky like the larks on the plains of Normandy, who ascend higher and higher till they go out of sight in the heavens, while their notes still fill the air with music dropping from above. The writings of Paul contain occasional bursts of fiery eloquence, of tender affection, of concentrated thought, without a parallel in human writings. And the words of Jesus, preserved in the four Gospels, stand forever alone. For in them we see a harmony of qualities elsewhere separated and divorced. They show us a reformer free to the verge of radicalism, yet a conservative unwilling that a jot of the old law should pass away until the good in it had been carried up to something better; a philanthropist, in whose mind all barriers between man and man had fallen away; one with a zeal so determined that he took the direct course to death as a martyr to the truth; with a charity so large that it included in its embrace all who wished to do the will of his Father in heaven, however sunk in misery, sin, and shame; and a piety so high and so constant that it enabled him to say what no other saint or sage could ever dare to utter, "I and my Father are one." And these powers of soul, heart, mind, are in such perfect harmony that no one of them is prominent, and that we never think of Jesus as reformer,

philanthropist, saint, or martyr, but as a heavenly brother, teacher, and friend.

The book which contains all this, and vastly more, is justly called "The Bible" or "The Book." There are two diametrically opposite views, however, taken of its origin, inspiration, and authority. One of these I call the theology of the spirit, and the other that of the letter.

The theology of the letter says of the Bible that it is "the word of God" in such a sense that every part of it proceeded by direct revelation from God. It is a supernatural revelation of God's truth, containing everything necessary for the religious life of man, for his happiness here and his hope hereafter. The writers were supernaturally and miraculously inspired, so that they could not make any mistake, and have not made any. There are no errors and no contradictions in the Bible. It is infallibly, verbally, literally true from end to end. All between its lids is the word of God. Its geology, astronomy, chronology, are perfect, and leave nothing to be desired. Its great men are saints to be admired and imitated, their crimes excused and explained away. Its Jewish part and its Christian part are in exact harmony; and he who questions or denies anything in it is an infidel, who had better never have been born.

This view of the infallibility of the letter of the Bible — or, as it was once called, its "plenary inspiration" — is not so very ancient, after all. It came up, in its extreme form, since the Reformation. Tholuck, the German theologian, a scholar highly esteemed in orthodox circles, tells us, in his essay on Inspiration,

that this doctrine arose in the controversy with the Roman Church. The Jesuits said, "We, in our Church, have unity, confidence, assurance. We have an outward infallible church to lean upon, an outward authority to which all can appeal, an outward judge to decide all questions. You Protestants have no such authority, nothing infallible, nothing sure. You have only your own inward emotions, different opinions, changing moods." Pressed by this argument, says Tholuck, the Protestants came by degrees to maintain that they also had an outward infallible authority,—namely, the infallible letter of the Bible,—and at last were driven, by the heat of controversy, to assert that not only the sense of the Bible, but the words, the letters, the Hebrew vowel-points, and the very punctuation, proceeded directly from God; and that the writers of the Bible were merely the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit,— the pen with which he wrote, the flute through which he breathed.

Now, I will call your attention to the fact that the writers of the Bible lay no claim to any such infallibility as this. They nowhere say that they were inspired to write books. Luke, for instance, gives his reason for writing his Gospel. He does not even say, like a modern Spiritualist, that "he wrote under influence," or that "his hand began to write by an irresistible power." He simply says, just as you or I might say in the dedication to the biography of a friend, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as *they* (who were eye-witnesses and servants of the word from the begin-

ning) delivered them unto us, it seemed good to me, also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write under thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." If Luke were conscious of being divinely inspired to write an infallible book, would he have given such reasons as he does here? He does not say, "You may be certain of the truth of what I say, because I am infallibly inspired to write"; but "You may be sure of the truth of what I say, because I have known all about it from the beginning, because I heard of it from those who were eye-witnesses; and so I thought it well to write this narrative."

Two texts are quoted to prove this verbal inspiration; and, because thus perpetually quoted, we may presume that they are the strongest which can be found. One says that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." But it does not say that this made them infallible. Holy men *now* declare that they are moved by the Holy Spirit, but they do not profess to be infallible. The other text says that "all Scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, instruction," etc. Yes, profitable or useful; but that is surely not the same thing as infallible authority. These texts teach an inspiration which I also gladly accept. They do not limit inspiration to the Jews or to the Bible. They teach that all holy men and all sacred books come from God, and have more or less of his truth and power and goodness in them. Yes, "all Scripture *is* given by inspiration"; the Scriptures of every race

and every land; every sacred book which has tamed man's pride, taught him to look up and adore, instructed him to be just, humane, true, and generous. No such books come wholly from the will of man. There is a divine element in them all, whether they are the Vedas of India, or the Koran, or the Dialogues of Plato, or Wordsworth's Ode to Immortality. "For every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Light."

There are many serious objections to the doctrine of the infallible inspiration of the Bible.

To say that every statement in the Bible comes directly from God produces wide-spread unbelief. A large part of the scepticism and infidelity of the present time may be traced directly to this source. Men are taught, from a thousand pulpits, that they are not Christians unless they believe the Bible wholly true from Genesis to Revelation. But they cannot believe this: therefore, they think they cannot be Christians. The Bible says that the world was created in six days; that by adding the genealogies from Adam to Abraham, and Abraham to Christ, we learn that it was created less than six thousand years ago; that the sun, moon, and stars were all made at that time; that the visible universe, as well as the human race, has therefore existed only during that period. But geology teaches by infallible documents, written on tables of stone, that the life of the earth, with that of innumerable plants and animals, goes back for millions of years; and that the light which we receive to-day from some distant stars left them hundreds of thousands of years ago. Anthropology shows us by human

bones and stone implements, found in ancient strata, that man must have existed in long distant periods of time, far beyond the epoch ascribed to the creation of Adam.

Now, when men are told that they must renounce the revelations of science and the truths of history, or cannot be Christians, some will make, reluctantly, that sad renunciation. They will abdicate reason, put a bandage over their eyes, and refuse to see facts, and call this voluntary blindness faith. Others will, I think more nobly, prefer to be called infidels rather than to tell a lie for God, or profess to believe what they know to be false. I have had persons tell me that they were infidels, because they could not believe that the whale swallowed Jonah or that Joshua made the sun stand still. I assured them that, in order to believe in Jesus Christ, it was not necessary to believe in Jonah or to have any opinions in regard to Joshua. Students of the Old and New Testaments find many contradictions between different books. Look at any harmony of the four Gospels, and you will find the same story told differently by the different Evangelists. These contradictions are of little consequence. They do not diminish our confidence in the truth of the narrative, and rather increase our sense of the honesty of the narrators, unless we adopt this theory of the infallibility of the record; and then they become fatal. These Scriptures differ in details, as human testimony will; but they agree in essentials.

No one can tell how much misery has been caused in honest minds by this doctrine of Scripture infallibility. Some people are made with that sense of truth that

they cannot shut their eyes to plain facts because they wish to, cannot make themselves believe by pure will. They reverence the character and teachings of Jesus, and would gladly become his disciples, but do not dare to do so, because they cannot accept as true what their reason tells them is false.

How many superstitions and cruelties have been sanctified by appeals to the letter of the Scriptures! During many centuries, thousands of poor wretches were burned alive as witches; and this belief rested on the universal conviction of Catholics and Protestants that the Bible clearly taught the reality of witchcraft. A single bishop caused six hundred to be burned. A French judge, Remy, boasted that he had burned eight hundred witches. A thousand persons were executed on this charge in one year in the Province of Como, in Italy. Catholic bishops and Protestant clergymen led the way. Luther said: "I would have no compassion on witches. I would burn them all." And all these horrors were triumphantly defended by the letter of the Bible.

So, in our day, we have seen slavery defended and despotism sustained by the letter of the Bible. Because Paul said, "Slaves, obey your masters," and "The powers that be are ordained of God," it was thought that God commanded men by Paul to submit to a despot like Nero, and to support a system which made of human beings chattels. So, too, single words are quoted to defend the doctrine that God has made beings who are certain to fall into sin, and that then he punishes them for that sin with endless torments. Such are the superstitions, dishonorable to God and

bringing untold miseries on man, which have been maintained in the world by this view of the Scriptures.

It has also brought about a confusion of Judaism and Christianity. The Old Testament, in some minds, has more authority than the New. In many pulpits, Moses has greater influence than Christ. Men still keep the Jewish Sabbath which Christianity abolished. The Lord's day, intended to be a day of freedom and joy, has been made a day of gloom by calling it "the Sabbath," and giving us Moses as our master to teach us what to do in it. Though all that Christ said or did in regard to it was such as to make him a Sabbath-breaker in Jewish eyes, men prefer the law of Moses on this point to his. The rest of the soul makes the Christian Sabbath. Whatever does that, whether it be a walk, a pleasant conversation, or restful book, is keeping the Sabbath: whatever disturbs the soul with unrest is Sabbath-breaking. The sacrificial worship of the Jews, by which from morning till evening the great altar of the temple ran with blood, has indeed been long abolished; but the influence of that system continues in the Catholic Church in the daily sacrifice of the mass, and in the Protestant Church in that blood theology which teaches that God is unable to forgive sin except by bloodshed, and that by the blood of an innocent victim. The apostles, who were Jews, accustomed to these perpetual sacrifices of the temple, naturally said: "Christ is our sacrifice." "He is our sin offering." "It is his blood, not that of goats and sheep, which saves us." And literal theology builds on these natural Jewish expressions a whole theory of substituted suffering and vicarious sacrifice.

Thus is the progress of thought arrested; thus is unbelief created; thus are we sent back from Christ to Moses by this Christian literalism. Thus we have a hard and dry theology, which studies the letter, broods over the text, and does not rise to the spirit of the gospel. To "read the Bible," whether it is understood or not, has been made a Protestant sacrament. Men carry the Bible in their trunk, or keep it on the centre-table as a protecting charm, making the house safer, or, at all events, more respectable. It was long thought dangerous to make any corrections in the text or in the translation, though it was known that there are errors in both.

The chief objection to this doctrine of the verbal infallibility of the whole Bible is that the spirit is chained down by the letter; that the living power of the words and soul of Jesus is neutralized and nullified by being tied to the dead body of old traditions which have long since lost their power. The strength of a chain is only that of its weakest link, so by this doctrine the power of the Bible is kept down to that of its poorest part.

It is a dreadful thing to kill the life of the gospel by low literal interpretation. "The letter killeth," says Paul. It does so.

The New Testament teaches, for example, a resurrection of soul and body; but this means ascent, progress, going up into a higher life of soul and a higher life of body. This is animating and inspiring. The New Testament, according to the spirit, shows us perpetual resurrection, endless ascent and progress, heaven above heaven, world above world. It shows us innu-

merable homes, adapted to all conditions of being; infinite variety there, as there is infinite variety here: of life and joy; of beauty, order, wonder, magnificence; plenty to know, plenty to do, plenty to love. This is our future existence, according to the spirit of the New Testament which gives life.

But the theology of the letter tells us, instead, of a resurrection of the same particles of an earthly body, of that flesh and blood which (we are told) cannot inherit the kingdom of God, of that corruptible matter which cannot see incorruption. The letter theology says that these poor, sickly bodies are to be gathered out of their graves, and then divided into two classes: one, of saints, to go to heaven and sing psalms forever; the other, of sinners, to be sent to hell, there to blaspheme God forever. Which of these two views is most worthy of the infinite Being, Creator of all, Father of all, whose sun shines on the evil and good, and whose inexhaustible power and love flow forever through the universe?

And, because of these superstitions, we have fierce attacks on the Bible, shallow criticisms on the Bible. When it is made the tyrant instead of the friend, violent reactions come. Men go about the country denouncing the Bible, quite ignorant of the nobleness, freedom, emancipating power, and broad humanity of this wonderful volume. Others are led by a critical reaction, and write books to point out an inconsistency here or a contradiction there, laboring to reduce to a minimum our trust in these grand utterances of the ever-present spirit of God. Because, in their opinion, the Apostle John did not write the Fourth Gospel,

all its sweet and sacred words are thought to be insignificant.

The theology of the spirit rises above this level waste of dreary controversy. It regards the Bible as inspired, but not infallible,— inspired in a higher degree by the same Spirit which has also spoken to men in all the great scriptures of the race. It believes in the authority of the Bible, but it is the authority which truth always has over honest and candid minds. It does not think it essential to decide when the books of the Bible were written, nor by whom, nor when they were collected and put together in the canon. The books remain the same, whoever wrote them. By giving their author another name, you cannot rob them of a single note of power or of love. We are sure that the best books have remained, for they have been guarded by the love of mankind. They are not supernatural in any sense but that in which all our life is overflowed by something from above, all nature filled with a diviner beauty, and by which there is something of God in all the best things said and done by man. There is no truer word than that of Emerson: —

> "Out from the heart of Nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old;
> The litanies of nations came,
> Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
> Up from the burning core below,—
> The canticles of love and woe."

I would believe more in divine inspiration than the old doctrine allows, not less. That teaches an occasional influx from God, coming and then going away; making a few prophets in a certain land and race, but

nowhere else. I believe in "the prophets who have been since the world began," in a God "who has never left himself without a witness in the world," in a light "which lightens every man who comes into the world." The old doctrine of inspiration is like a theory of water which should only tell us of the deluge when it rained forty days and forty nights, and when the waters covered the earth. The new doctrine is like the other view of water, which describes its perpetual descent in dews by night, in showers by day, in winter snow and tropical storms, making the whole earth glad and full of life. "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, making it bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that proceedeth out of my mouth, saith the Lord."

It may be said, "If we know so little about the origin of the Bible and how it came together, how can we be sure that we have the right books in it, and not the wrong ones?" There is a principle which applies in literature as well as in science, called "the survival of the fittest." The best writings are preserved by the love of mankind: the poor ones perish. Many of the books of the Old Testament are lost. The present books appeal to them as authority,— quote the "Book of Iddo the Seer" and the "Book of Jasher." But it is not probable that we have lost much in losing them. We see something of the New Testament in the process of formation. Eusebius, about 325, tells us of three classes of books,— those generally accepted, those generally rejected, those accepted by some and not by others. One of the books which has now dropped out

entirely was in the MSS. of the New Testament till the fifth century. This was the Epistle of Barnabas.

The greatness of the Bible does not consist in the tame monotony of one uniform revelation, the same teaching in the Book of Kings as the Gospel of John, but in the very opposite,— in a variety which meets every temper of the mind, every phase of life, every tone of earthly experience. There are hours of dark despair, when, of all the books of the Bible, only Ecclesiastes is welcome as an adequate expression of that black mood of the soul. There are hours of bold questioning, when we call on the heaven above and the earth beneath to explain the awful enigmas of human life. And if then, in our most audacious flight of thought, we open the Book of Job, we find a bolder reason than our own, one which casts aside all pious phrases and demands to know the exact truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, whether God is thereby vindicated or not.

None have done more injustice to the inexhaustible volume of inspiration in the Bible than the long series of theologians who have made it their aim to put the Bible into the press of their system, and to force every part to conform to every other part. Those who find the doctrine of the Trinity in the three angels of the Book of Genesis; the doctrine of total depravity in the sad wail of Jeremiah over the sins of his time; who see Anselm's doctrine of atonement typified in the Jewish scapegoat, and the Christian resurrection indicated in Job's desperate cry to God to come and vindicate him in the flesh on earth,— such theologians have done their best to squeeze the life out of the Bible.

How much nobler is Dean Stanley, who speaks thus of the Book of Esther! —

"It is expedient for us that there should be one book in the Bible which omits the name of God altogether, to prevent us from attaching to the mere name a reverence which belongs only to the reality. . . . The name of God is not there, but the work of God is." "Let those who cling to the authority of every book in the Bible be warned by this not to make a man an offender for a word or the omission of a word. When Esther nerved herself to enter, at the risk of her life the presence of Ahasuerus, — 'I will go in unto the King; and, if I perish, I perish'; when her patriotism uttered itself in the noble cry, 'How can I endure to see the evil that shall come upon my people? how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?' — she then expressed, though she never named the name of God, a religious devotion as acceptable to him as that of Moses and David, who no less sincerely had the sacred name always on their lips."

Thus speaks Dean Stanley, and adds that Esther in this is the Cordelia of the Bible, the sister who refuses to use words of praise to her father, but acts her gratitude in her life.

> "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
> Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds
> Reverberate no hollowness."

I wish the Bible to be more loved and honored than it is now, not less. I wish it more a source of faith and hope than now; to bring us nearer to God than it now does; to make Christ more interesting, and more

of a true Teacher, Master, and Friend. The better we understand it, the more shall we revere it,— not with a blind homage, but with an intelligent admiration. The more freely we use our reason, separating the chaff from the wheat, the more will the genuine power and beauty of the Bible be made manifest. God, who has given the Bible, has also given us our reason with which to examine and understand it; and we are guilty before him if we bury this talent in the earth and hide our Lord's money.

If we preach a free and rational Christianity, let us do it in order to make men more religious, not less so. Teach them that God loves all his children in all worlds; that if they are punished for sin, here or hereafter, it is that they may be made better; that God desires even the wicked to be as happy as they are capable of being; that all suffering will be found at last to be the means of greater good; that we can all begin now to love God, trust in him and serve him; that to serve him is to do good to our fellow-men; that true religion is not belief, but life, not creed, but conduct; that, since God has made us, he must have put something good in all of us, and that we ought to cultivate whatever in us is good, and so put down the evil; that God is always near us, an all-surrounding love, ready to help, inspire, and strengthen us; that all true religion must be in accordance with reason, at harmony with science, art, and literature; that there can be no war between God's oldest revelation of himself in nature and what he teaches by inspired men. Teach men to see God in all things,—in the stars and the rocks, the ocean storms and the tropic calm; in the infant's smile

and the mild evening of a good man's life. Thus shall we oppose best the progress of unbelief and irreligion, and of that moral death which consists in living without God in the world. Let us not be afraid of doubt, for truth can never die. Instead of thinking much of death and hereafter, let us make a heaven here below by faithful lives, and leave our future to God in perfect submission and entire trust.

THE TRUE COMING OF CHRIST.

"What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?"—MATT. XXIV., 3.

SOME time ago there was held in New York what was called in the programme a "Prophetic Conference" of those who believe in a personal and visible coming of Christ to reign on earth. They seriously and earnestly declared their conviction, based on the letter of Scripture, that Christ is to reign on earth with his saints, in outward presence. When he comes, there is to be an audible trumpet blown, and his disciples are to be caught up to meet their Lord in the air. All these Scriptures are to be taken literally, as representing outward commotion, physical disturbance, and manifestations addressed to the senses. And the great result looked for is the putting down of evil, and the establishment of goodness, not by moral, but by physical agency. The power of truth and love having been tried in vain during eighteen centuries, the kingdom of heaven is to be established at last by irresistible force. This is the simple statement of the doctrine held by the excellent and learned gentlemen who joined in the conference.

And, we must add, it is the belief which has been held very extensively in the Christian Church. The Church has never believed that the world would be converted to Christ by moral and spiritual means

alone. It has always anticipated that, after a certain number of years or centuries, the present method of attempting to make men better by preaching Christ, distributing Bibles, and founding churches, would end, and be tried no longer. Instead of it, there would be a day of judgment, an outward revelation of divine power to punish and reward, the good forcibly taken up to heaven, the wicked forcibly sent down to hell. The belief of the Church has been that the moral agencies of Christianity would be only partially successful, and would be finally supplemented by irresistible divine force. The truth and love of God, as shown in Jesus, and the influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind and heart, being found inadequate to convert the world, this experiment will cease, and all spiritual agencies will terminate in a peremptory winding up of the Christian Church on earth, a general settlement of accounts, payment of debts, and a legal adjustment of the affairs of the human race, saints and sinners.

In this view, it is evident there prevails a deep infidelity. It is a declaration of unbelief in the moral and spiritual power of Christianity to overcome evil with good. It is saying to the world: "We know we shall never beat you with our weapons, which are merely moral. But take care: we shall get hold of yours, by and by; and then we shall conquer you."

Is this any exaggeration? Is it not a fair statement of the case? Let us look and see.

Christianity teaches that Jesus came to save the world and conquer sin by revealing God's truth and love, by pardoning his enemies, by dying for them on the cross. Christianity is the power which overcomes

evil with good. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Flesh and blood cannot see the kingdom of God. When Nicodemus told Jesus that he believed he was a teacher sent from God, because he worked such astounding miracles of power, Jesus replied that, with such ideas, he could not even see the coming kingdom. Truth, love, goodness, are the great forces of Christianity, to which it owes all its real success in the world. If Christ is to reign, he must reign by these means. If every knee bows to him, every knee must bow from conviction and love. If men are compelled to submit by a revelation of irresistible power, they do not submit to Christ, and worship him: they bow to force, and worship that.

This seems elementary. If Christ, who represents the divine truth and love in the world, must finally be placed on his throne by the interference of infinite, irresistible power, it is evident that Christ will not reign, but that irresistible power will reign. In that case, Christ and Christianity will confess failure, and abdicate, and be replaced by the old dispensation of omnipotent force.

This is what literalism leads to, or originates in. It is infidelity disguised as faith. It is a return to the Old Testament, a relapse into Judaism. It is substituting the letter, which kills, for the spirit, which giveth life.

Nevertheless, it is no doubt true that the New Testament has much to say of the coming of Christ. Jesus himself, at the request of his disciples, answers at length their question in the text, "What shall be the

signs of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" It is not "the end of the world," as our translators wrongly have it, but the end of the first dispensation,—the present age of the world. The time before the Messiah was *this* age; the time of the Messiah was the coming age, or the world to come. When they asked, "What shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" they asked for the signs of his coming as the Christ. Thus far, he had not come as the Christ, the king: he had appeared only as a prophet, like any other Jewish prophet.

The idea of a "*second* coming of Christ" is not in the Bible. There is only one coming,—that is, his coming as the Christ, the king. This is the coming everywhere spoken of in the New Testament, and described in images and figures in the Book of Revelation. It is the apocalypse, or revelation, of Jesus as the Christ, the king. When he went about preaching in Galilee, he had not *come* as the Christ, but as a great prophet. When he died on the cross, he had not come as the Christ, but as a great high priest. When would he come as the Christ, as the king; come to reign over the earth, to put down his enemies, to exalt his friends? That was what they wished to know.

And Jesus, who foresaw, in that deep insight which always produces foresight, the evils and woes which would precede the spread of his religion, described them all in words of infinite pathos. But he added a few words which ought to show our modern prophets how much they are mistaken in expecting his coming to be only hereafter, since it had already begun to take place centuries ago. "This generation shall not pass

away till all these things are fulfilled." If Christ spoke truth, his coming began before that generation passed away. That age came to an end; and his kingdom was set up when Jerusalem fell, when the temple was destroyed and the Jews dispersed. Then Christianity took the place of Judaism as the great monotheistic religion of the world. Down to that time, Moses had been the religious leader of mankind; henceforth, Jesus became its religious leader. That was his coming, the end of that age, and the beginning of another.

If this is so, then the coming of Christ was not outward and visible, but in the power of his truth and his love. And is not this always his true coming,—the coming of faith, hope, and love in the human heart? To each of us Christ comes, when he thus comes; when he is born within us the hope of glory. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for the kingdom of God is within you." "Flesh and blood" do not inherit that kingdom, the physical senses do not see it nor hear it: it is a revelation of God to the soul. Which is better, to be caught up outwardly, in the air, to meet Christ; or to be caught up inwardly into communion with his spirit? There is nothing local or material about Christ's coming.

When Christ described his coming and the events which should precede it, he used the high poetic language of the soul. Not only as a man of the East he spoke in figures, but also as a prophet to whom outward things were, as they always are, the types and symbols of inward realities. Prosaic people took him literally then, and they take him literally now. When

he told them they must eat his flesh and drink his blood in order to get any good out of him, they were displeased, and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" "Flesh!" he answered, "the flesh profits nothing. Only the spirit of what I say will quicken your dead souls." "The letter kills," said the apostle, even the letter of the New Testament. But not the less from that day to this have prosaic pedants clung to the letter of his words, building up theories about a reign on earth of a thousand years, of audible trumpets and visible angels, of material fire and a great noise. That which babes in faith can understand, these wise and prudent theologians fail to see. Since Christ is spirit, his only possible coming is a spiritual coming. Suppose he *should* come as a flesh and blood Christ, how would that help us? Did not Paul say that he did not wish to know Christ after the flesh? His coming, if it is to bless us, must be wholly spiritual. The angels who shall call his chosen ones from the four quarters of the earth are those mighty convictions which are to bring all human souls together into one common faith. The heavenly trumpet is the voice of truth, which rouses us from the slumber of indifference and unbelief. The greatest clamor in the air is not as glorious as the still, soft voice in the heart, which awakens penitence and hope. The burning of the sky and land in a material conflagration is a matter of little consequence compared with the burning up of evil and sin in human hearts. To substitute, then, an outward coming of Christ in the air for an inward coming in the soul, a seen and temporal coming for an unseen and eternal one, is to

degrade the gospel to the level of a commonplace superstition.

Rightly understood, Christ's coming is perpetual and continuous. We are not to stand looking up into the sky expecting him, but to look into our hearts and around into the world, and find him now. Do not look for him to-morrow, or next year. Let to-morrow take care of itself. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Christ comes to us every day, when we are led to think right, feel right, do right.

Christ so identified himself with his gospel that he knew that wherever that went he himself would be. He lived in his disciples and in God. "I in them, and they in me." Paul said that he himself did not live, but that Christ lived in him, the hidden man of his heart. So we also have a right to feel, whenever we are lifted above ourselves, by any noble desire, any generous purpose, any power by which we can do real good to our fellow-men, Christ is now living within us, and is nearer to us then than if we saw his visible manifestation in the sky.

If Christ were to come to-day to Boston in outward visible presence; if he should come surrounded by angels; if he should come with power to raise the dead, and to work mighty miracles,— that would still be no real coming of Christ to those unprepared to receive him. He would be no nearer to them than he is now.

And to the humble, the upright, the honest seekers after truth, to those who trust to the infinite tenderness of God, Christ is as near now as he would be then. Looking at the outward Christ with the out-

ward eye is not seeing him. We do not see him till we look at him inwardly, with the eye of the soul.

When Jesus described the judgment of the world, which was to take place at his coming, when all the heathen nations should come to be judged, and be divided, the sheep from the goats, he described the judgment which is always going on in the world. Whenever a new truth comes to the world or to the soul, it divides the sheep from the goats. Those who are prepared for it by the love of goodness, those who have their lamps burning, and keep oil in them, are able to accept the truth, and go into the marriage feast of law and gospel, faith and works, truth and love. For let us remember that the essential coming of Jesus is always the reconciliation of divine truth and love in the soul.

Here is a man who believes in God's truth, but not in God's love. He has a sense of duty, a feeling of responsibility; he is weighed down by the pressure of sin; he is worried by anxiety about doing his duties in the right way. But he has no real confidence in God or God's fatherly love. Perhaps, some day, in the midst of his depression, a light streams in. All at once, he sees that he can trust his heavenly Father, just as his own child trusts himself. The moment he sees this, and feels it, Christ has come to him. As long as he feels it, Christ dwells in him. Life is new to him, full of hope and joy. He may use the language of Paul, and say, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God."

And here is another man, who has spent his life in a routine of work, who has never doubted God's love or his providence, but has labored in a narrow sphere,

only for himself and his family. He has not gone out of himself in sympathy with others, he has not had his share in that double blessing which comes to those who are helping others. But, one day, he is led to take an interest in some divine truth, to take hold of some good cause not his own, to make some sacrifice to help others. Then a new peace comes to him, a new life is poured into his heart. Christ has now come to him, and is born in him the hope of glory.

If we look for a Christ coming in the sky, sitting on the clouds, surrounded with visible angels, blowing an audible trumpet, we shall not see the real Christ who is here at our side in the streets of Boston. That is the objection to these prophetic expectations,— that they dull our souls to the ever-present realities of God and heaven.

The real Christ will come to you to-morrow, if you will. When you go to your work, if you ask of God a right spirit; if you begin the day with the desire to be of use to some one, to be in a spirit of true sympathy with those about you; and go through it thus, trusting in God's presence and help to enable you to do some good to your fellow-men,— you will have Christ with you all the day. You will not see any shining cross in the sky, but you will be able to bear your earthly cross, and will find yourself brought into kindly relations with others, able to help them in simple ways, giving and receiving sympathy. This is the real coming of Christ to us; and thus we hear him saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

Christ also comes in the great events of history, which contribute to the progress of the human race.

When Jerusalem was compassed with armies, and terrible bloodshed and awful suffering fell on the nation; when the vast courts of the temple were slippery with blood, and at last the holy place, so wonderful in its majestic beauty, was wrapped in flames,— that was a coming of Christ. For, out of the midst of those horrors, came a new and better day. The disciples of Jesus, driven from Judea, went everywhere preaching the word. Christianity, instead of continuing a Jewish sect, was transformed into the religion of the world.

So, when the barbarians, pouring down on the Roman empire, seemed about to destroy the civilization of the past, treading with ruthless feet on literature, art, knowledge, it, nevertheless, was another coming of Christ. For then the old worn-out races and institutions gave way, and the new history began. Modern Europe rests on the union of Roman laws and customs with Teutonic freedom, and both are held together by Christian faith.

The Lutheran Reformation came with war, suffering, bloodshed, and men's hearts failing them for terror. Yet out of it all came freedom of thought, independence of religion, manly faith, and the spirit of modern progress. Modern science and modern discoveries have been influenced, if not created, by that vast movement of free thought. That was also a coming of Christ.

When our Civil War came, amid its horrors there came also an end to that evil which was itself a perpetual war. With the end of slavery, with the beginning of a real union of these States, a new epoch came in the life of the world, in the progress of humanity.

Thus, the descriptions which Christ gave of the

signs of his coming and the end of that age are fulfilled anew in every development of Christian history. Mankind still marches forward, through evil into a higher good, through war to a deeper peace, through sin to a better salvation.

It advances through tempests, earthquakes, and fiery outbursts of evil, hearing at last the still, small voice of a divine faith and love.

Therefore, do not ask, When is Christ coming and when is he to appear? You will not find the answer by the study of prophecy or by calculating the seventy weeks of Daniel. Christ is here now, if you will open your soul to him. He is not hidden, nor afar off. Whenever you will try to do your duty, trusting in God; whenever you will help and comfort any weary soul; whenever you will forgive those whom you think have injured you, and do good to those who treat you with seeming scorn; when you will put out of your heart envy and low ambition, poor vanity, self-conceit, and give yourself to what is generous, true, and lovely,—you will discover that Christ has already come; for his hour cometh always, and is now.

Thou comest, O my Master,
'Mid shock of fire and steel,
In trouble and disaster,
To soothe and save and heal.
For thou art always nearest
When we are most alone,
And thy dear love is dearest
When other loves are flown.
When hearts are sick with sorrow,
When souls are torn by sin,
Then shines the better morrow,
Then dawns the peace within.

AGNOSTICISM vs. POSITIVISM.

An interesting work has lately appeared called *The Insuppressible Book*. It contains, reprinted from magazines, articles by Herbert Spencer and Frederic Harrison, in which they carry on a discussion as to the nature of religion and the object of worship. Spencer is an agnostic, Harrison is a positivist. Both believe that the worship of a personal God, who is at once infinite in power, knowledge, and goodness, has passed by. But they differ very strongly and radically as to what is to take the place of the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and as to what constitutes the essence of religion. The book gives us a specimen of anti-theological controversy quite as sharp and stinging as were the old disputes among theologians. This shows us that unbelief no less than belief may be the source of controversy, and that polemical disputes do not come from religion, but from human nature. It also shows that men cannot live without faith, and that the last scrap of faith that remains to them is so precious that it cannot be relinquished without a severe struggle. Herbert Spencer clings to his belief in an unknown God as firmly as Athanasius did to his Trinity; and Frederic Harrison cannot spare the luxury of worshipping that curious abstraction, the spirit of Humanity. The aspirations of man toward the unseen and infinite

Source of all things may not be suppressed. No sooner does a generation turn from its old faith than it eagerly seeks for something to take its place. If it does not believe in God, it believes in ghosts, or in Esoteric Buddhism, or in Theosophic visions, or the adoration of the Unknowable, or the worship of Humanity.

There have been periods in which whole nations and communities have held, without doubt or inquiry, a traditional religion. They acquiesced in its tenets, accepted its sacraments, and thought no more about it. Our age is different. It is intensely interested in all that relates to religious questions. Nothing is too sacred to be examined: all questions are open questions. This last is much the more hopeful condition of the two. Lazy assent is not faith, is not even belief. A mind which is awake and active is sure, at last, to arrive at truth: one which is asleep is incapable either of belief or unbelief.

I find this discussion between Spencer and Harrison very interesting, as showing how impossible it is to rest long in negations. Herbert Spencer clings to the conviction, which he calls "an absolute certainty," that "all things proceed from an infinite and eternal Energy," and that this is "the one indestructible element of consciousness"; and that belief in this Power, which transcends phenomena, has the highest validity of any of our beliefs. But for certain logical reasons, which appear to me somewhat illogical, he maintains that we know nothing of the nature of this infinite Energy.

To this statement, Frederic Harrison replies by

saying that such a belief is not a religion, but the ghost of a religion; that no one can worship or obey an unknown God. "The roots and fibres of religion," he says, "are to be found in love, awe, sympathy, gratitude, consciousness of inferiority and dependence, community of will, . . . reverence for majesty, goodness, creative energy and life. Where these things are not, religion is not." And he adds that no one can worship, love, or obey the Unknowable, and that therefore Mr. Spencer's religion is no religion. "The something of which we can neither know nor conceive anything is practically nothing." "You cannot check vice, crime, and war by the 'Absolute Unknowable,' nor train up men and women by it to holiness and truth." Take away the human element out of religion, and there is no working religion; and the new cry against anthropomorphism, or seeing mind, heart, and will in God like those in ourselves, Mr. Harrison finds absurd and false. If there are no human elements in the Deity, then we can neither love nor obey him.

In this criticism on Spencer, Mr. Harrison seems to me essentially right. But, when he gives us his own object of worship, I think he becomes essentially wrong. Humanity alone, he says, is the object of worship. We know nothing of the supernatural world, but we do know the human world; and "the great being, Humanity," is the grandest object of reverence and love.

To this, Mr. Spencer replies, and with much force, so far as Mr. Harrison's new religion is concerned. To worship "the great being, Humanity," is to worship human folly and ignorance, as well as human knowledge

and goodness; it is to worship slaveholding, war, and the public opinion which approves the oppression of weak nations by the strong. If "humanity sweeps onward," it is by an unconscious process, and not by any deliberate purpose of human beings as a whole. The veneration and gratitude due to this progress do not belong to human nature, but to that great ultimate Cause from which it comes; not to the bubbles floating on the river, but to the vast current which carries them forward. This is the grand "stream of Creative Power," unlimited in space and time, of which humanity is a transitory product. The worship of Humanity, then, can never be a religion, since, for mankind to worship and adore, it needs to look up to some power higher and better than itself.

To this, Mr. Harrison answers that an unknown God cannot be the object of faith and obedience, and that these constitute religion. He maintains that the vast majority of thinkers agree that the foundation of a creed must rest on the known and knowable. So say theists and atheists, Christians and sceptics, Catholics and unbelievers. By the religion of Humanity, Mr. Harrison says he means one of social duties, a regard for the rights of others, living for one's fellow-men. The religion of Humanity means these sentiments "pushed to their full extent, and crowned by sympathy and imagination." It is "morality fused with social devotion and enlightened by sound philosophy." This, Mr. Harrison believes, will take the place of all faith in a higher power, all worship of God, and all sense of dependence on him. But there will be no religion and no progress, no fulness of generous love and devoted

affection, if we take a cynical view of human nature, and regard men as no better than animals, and subjects for contempt.

I will not follow this debate any further. Both of our philosophers reject the Christian religion. Mr. Spencer makes it a point of conscience never to enter a church: Mr. Harrison hopes for the day in which Christianity will come to an end. But, if we put together what each affirms, and leave out what each denies, we shall have as the result the substance of Christian faith and Christian conduct.

It has often been remarked that, in a controversy, the affirmatives on each side are apt to be true, and the negatives false. The famous debate of the two knights as to whether the shield hanging between them was gold or silver illustrates this principle. Each was right in what he asserted, and wrong in what he denied. One said it was gold, and in this was right; for the side which he saw was gold. He denied that it was silver, and in this was wrong; for the other side was silver. What we see we know and can assert; but there may be a great deal which we do not see, and we are wrong if we deny its existence.

Mr. Spencer sees that there is an infinite Being behind all phenomena,— "an infinite and eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained, the ultimate Cause of all things." In this affirmation, he is at one with the highest philosophy and theology of all times,— at one with Socrates and Plato, with Augustine and Aquinas, with Leibnitz and Kant, with Bishop Butler and Lord Bacon. But he denies that we can conceive of this First Cause in terms of human

consciousness, that we can ascribe to the Unknowable love, will, intelligence. In this denial, he is opposed to the great thinkers I have mentioned, and opposed to the universal religious experience of the human race.

That which Mr. Spencer denies Mr. Harrison affirms. He contends for an object of worship known, real, and in sympathy with human needs and human aspirations. In this assertion, he puts himself in line with the highest religion of mankind; for Christianity teaches that Jesus, the man of men, was the image of the unseen God. It teaches that the intelligence, freedom, and affection of the human soul are the best revelations of that which is infinite and eternal. God in nature is seen as the infinite and eternal source of all things. God in Christ is seen as the Father, Saviour, and Friend of his creatures. If, then, we combine what Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison affirm, we have at once the infinite Being and the personal Friend. If we accept what each sees and reject what each is unable to see, we find that the sincerest thought of the world brings us back to the teaching of Jesus.

This discussion shows us also that the old method of suppressing doubt and denial was far inferior to the modern way of leaving thought free. The freest thought is sure to bring us to the highest truth. But, when we attempt to suppress thought, we are like those who, to avoid the noise of escaping steam, fasten down the safety-valve of a steam-engine. Then comes the risk of explosion and disaster.

These are questions which cannot be suppressed, which come to the surface again and again. They can only be finally settled on the principles of truth and justice.

It is interesting to observe how impossible it is for man to ignore the relation he sustains to the Deity. Here are two leading thinkers,—one an agnostic, declaring that we know nothing of God; the other a positivist, asserting that we only know material phenomena. And they engage in a serious discussion concerning the true object of worship. The agnostic declares that we have an absolute certainty of the existence of an infinite and eternal Energy above all material phenomena, from which matter and mind both proceed. He will not call this power God, but he affirms it to be the infinite and eternal Being, Source of all things; and that is what Christians know as God. When Paul saw the altar to the unknown God, he told the Athenians that this was the power in whom we live and move and have our being.

What reasons does Mr. Spencer give for denying to the infinite Being the attributes of intelligence, affection, personality, and will, analogous to those in man? He thinks that, as the process of evolution goes on, such human attributes drop out of the conception of Deity, till religion ends in reverence for the mysterious and unknown basis of all being. But why does he thus believe? His objections, as he states them, to all human conceptions of the Deity, are purely metaphysical. They are not original with him; they are borrowed, through Dean Mansel, from Sir William Hamilton, who declared that the Infinite could not be known, but must be believed. Herbert Spencer is more logical, and declares that the attributes of Deity which cannot be known cannot be believed; for how can we believe that of which we know nothing?

The objections urged against our knowledge of God by Hamilton, Mansel, Spencer, and Harrison are based on a supposed impossibility of conceiving an infinite Being occupying itself with finite ends or transactions. Here is his statement in its most condensed form: "A consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by separate objects and occurrences cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and occurrences. . . . The willing of each end excludes from consciousness for an interval the willing of other ends, and is therefore inconsistent with that omnipresent activity which simultaneously works out an infinity of ends." That is to say, that our human conception of intelligence and will forbids us from conceiving of their being occupied with more than one thing at a time. Such, however, is not the case. A person playing on a piano is at once directing the movement of his fingers, reading the score, and perhaps listening to what some one else is saying. If man can attend to two or three things at once, why cannot an infinite Being attend to all things at once? Moreover, Spencer's argument, if fatal to human conceptions of the Deity, is equally fatal to his own conception of an infinite and eternal Energy from which all things proceed. For all that we know of force or energy is its operation in single instances,— in the fall of a particular stone or the movement of a particular planet. An energy which causes all things is as foreign from human experience as an intelligence which comprehends all things.

Such purely metaphysical arguments produce no permanent conviction. To tell us that we cannot believe what we are in fact believing is logical trifling. But

the whole foundation of the agnostic theory is such a series of quibbles. The conception of a personal Deity, it is said, is unthinkable, because personality, as we know it, is finite and limited. But, as we do actually carry in thought this belief in an infinite Person, it will be difficult to persuade us that it is unthinkable. It seems hardly possible that such an acute mind as Spencer's should not have seen the fallacy of his arguments against anthropomorphism, if he had not confounded it with the low conception of Deity around him. To him, a personal God means one who is angry, who is changeable, who creates beings foreordained to endless suffering. But the essence of personal being is not found in such views as these. Fundamentally, it means that unity of intelligence, love, and freedom which are combined and correlated in the human soul. The more perfect the harmony of these three elements, the higher is personality in man. When the human will acts freely, out of knowledge and toward love, man is at his best. Pure knowledge is mental sight, and has none of the limitations which belong to the reflective intelligence. Love is not a changing emotion, but a permanent direction of the soul toward good. Will, when perfectly free, does not imply effort, but pure activity and fulness of life. Conceive of these elements, love, light, life, carried to the infinite perfection, and you have the conception of Him who is eternal goodness, perfect wisdom, and an unchanging law of creative life. This is the true conception of the divine personality.

And this conception of personality is higher than that of energy or power. If God is by definition the

infinite Being and the perfect Being, we cannot exclude personality from the idea of Deity without taking a lower view of God in this respect than of man. Goodness is greater than power. An infinite but blind energy is below a finite intelligence, and unconscious creative force is inferior in kind to the quality of generous devotion in human hearts. If, then, we would avoid the conception of an imperfect and finite Deity, we must include in our idea of God intelligence, love, and will, in perfect harmony of action. The great Greek tragedian declared this long ago, when he made his Prometheus wise, generous, and unchanging in his resolutions, and thus superior to the despot who tormented him by the exercise of infinite force.

> "His godlike crime was to be kind;
> To render by his precepts less
> The sum of human wretchedness,
> And strengthen man in his own mind."

The advancing religious conception will not leave behind any of the great convictions which have inspired the past, but will carry them upward to a higher and larger idea. It will combine the faith in that presence which the heaven of heavens cannot contain with the providential care without which not a sparrow falls to the ground. That which makes the Bible the handbook of religious faith is that it unites these conceptions of the eternal and infinite Being of beings with that of the father, helper, and savior of every trusting soul. It tells us that "from him and through him and to him are all things," and also that we are in him and he in us, and that he is faithful and just

to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The humblest Christian combines in his simple faith the affirmations of Spencer and of Harrison, and thus sees more of God than either.

Yet let us do full justice to the service rendered by science to religion. It is a very short time since theologians and preachers undertook to expound the inmost mysteries of the Godhead, and to define the relation and office of each of the three infinite Persons. It is not long since they talked familiarly of God's plans and purposes, and ascribed to the infinite Mind the conception of a "plan of salvation" and a "schéme of redemption," thinking God altogether such a one as they themselves. It is only recently that they denounced damnation from God against those who did not receive their dogmas, or those who did not worship according to their ritual. They limited the love of God to a few of his children, and regarded him as chiefly occupied with this world and the destiny of the Jewish nation, interfering to reward or punish by special miracles. They assumed that the universe of suns and stars was created some six thousand years ago, and that man was then placed in a garden in Mesopotamia.

Then astronomy came, and showed what a minute atom our earth is among the millions of suns and worlds that are revealed by the telescope. Geology came, and unrolled the rocky leaves of the history of the planet, and showed us during what enormous periods the creation of the earth was going on, and that man has existed here not thousands, but probably hundreds of thousands of years. Thus, science has

caused us to lift up our eyes, and arrive at conceptions of the Deity larger and far more worthy of him. And so, in the progressive thought of the world, truth and love will meet together, science and faith kiss each other. Knowledge shall spring out of the earth, and religion shall look down from heaven.

THE HERCULES AND WAGONER OF TO-DAY;

OR,

STATE HELP vs. SELF-HELP.

We all remember in our Æsop the story of "Hercules and the Wagoner." The wagon was fast in the deep clay; and the wagoner, instead of endeavoring to pry it out, knelt and prayed to Hercules to get it out for him. Hercules replied, "Take hold yourself, and then I will help you." The moral of the story is still timely and needed. How apt we are to seek the help of others instead of doing the work ourselves! Man is naturally a lazy animal, who finds it easier to lean on another's strength than to exert his own. Let me illustrate the fable by present events. A custom is growing up among us of calling on the national or the State governments to do what the people are quite able to do themselves. The nation is the wagoner; and it is acquiring the habit of calling on its government, which it regards as a sort of demigod, a Hercules, to help it out of its difficulties.

How impossible it is to help one who will make no exertion on his own behalf! The almsgiving conscientiously taught as a duty by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe produced a class of beggars who made mendicancy their regular business. Protestants have

fallen into the same mistake, and by giving to all who ask have often done more harm than good. There are so many charitable societies in Boston that an ingenious person who does not wish to bear his own burdens has often been able to obtain a very good support, without working, by going first to one benevolent association and then to another. For this reason, the Associated Charities was established, which keeps a record of such cases; and, by applying to this board, one can usually learn whether an applicant ought to be helped or not.

But it is not merely private benevolence which sometimes does more harm than good. Aid given through the government is still more likely to be abused. There are some things which the government must do for the community, because individuals are not competent. That which is necessary for the welfare of the public, and yet which the people are unable to accomplish for themselves, may very properly be done by the government; that is, by the people acting in their collective capacity. On this principle, the government lays out roads, erects light-houses, establishes courts of justice, organizes the army and navy for national defence, conducts the postal service, and taxes the people for public schools. As society advances, what was once a matter of luxury outside of the sphere of government becomes a necessity for human comfort and happiness. Hence, we have public parks, a public library, and various public improvements.

But here comes in the danger of assuming that whatever the people want the government ought to do. And that danger is increasing. I think it is becoming too much the fashion to call on the govern-

ment to do what the people ought to do in their private capacity. Formerly, the democratic theory required a strict construction of the powers of the government. Nothing must be done by Congress which was not explicitly warranted by the letter of the Constitution. The constant fear was that the legislative body would assume powers which did not belong to it. Hence, the opposition to the United States Bank, and to that very modest form of internal improvement known as the Cumberland, or National, road. This salutary dread lest the legislative body might exceed its legitimate powers is rapidly passing away. Let us look at some examples of the habit which has grown up of asking the central government to do what it would be much better for the people to do for themselves.

One of the most plausible propositions of this sort is that which asks the government to appropriate an enormous sum from the national treasury to support Southern schools. It is plausible, because resting on the fact that the colored freemen of the South never had the opportunity in slavery times of going to school; and, since they were emancipated, their whole energy has hardly been sufficient to enable them to obtain the necessities of life. Five millions of people came out of slavery into freedom with absolutely nothing,—not really owning an acre of land nor the clothing upon their backs, nor a plough or mule; for these were the property of their former owners. It is marvellous that they should have done so well. They are fast becoming owners of the soil; they are eager to learn; they engage in various trades. It is asked, ought not the government, which has given them freedom and

the ballot, to teach them how to use these privileges aright? It is a kind feeling which prompts the proposed gift; but is it wise? The Southern States, so Mr. Mayo tells us, are making great efforts for public schools. He assures us that the white people of the South are practically unanimous in their desire to have the negro educated, and are making great exertions to have him taught to read and write, which before the war they took the greatest pains to prevent. The old slave States are spending more than fifteen millions for education, and increasing the amount every year. They are bearing their own burden nobly. If the United States undertakes to do it for them, their own interest will be likely to slacken. We have had one proof of this in the case of Connecticut. This State received a sum of about two millions from the sale of the Western Reserve in Ohio, and invested it as a school fund. The result was disastrous. The people lost their interest in the schools when they were no longer obliged to pay for them, and the cause of education went backward. So it will be in the South, if this large government aid is given unconditionally. If the amount of help given to each State should be about half as much as the State should raise itself, the effect of the donation might not be so bad, though even then it would probably be injurious. Encourage the colored people by private sympathy and private help, but do not teach them to lean on the government. Help them to help themselves.

Another proposition of the same sort is that of exempting the soldiers of the war from the operation of the civil service law. The old soldiers already have

a preference by law over others, when they are equal to others on the examination. It is now asked that, without passing any examination, veterans shall be preferred for appointment and employment over others who have been examined under the civil service rules. This proposal, which was defeated last year in our legislature, is again being urged. There are three serious objections to it, either of which ought to insure its defeat.

1. It is an insult to the soldiers. It assumes that their capacity and attainments are below those of the rest of the community, and that they are unable to pass the examinations to which other applicants for office are subjected. It also assumes that they are anxious to be excused from the operations of the laws which are for the benefit of the community; that they wish for special privileges; that they desire to have offices for which they cannot show themselves fitted. All these assumptions are false. The soldiers themselves make no such claim. They ask no special favors. When the war ended, these men, who had given up their occupations in order to save the country, did not ask the government to take care of them, but quietly returned to their homes, and found for themselves new means of support. Now, twenty years after, it is assumed by those who profess to be their friends, that they need some peculiar privileges denied to the rest of their fellow-citizens. I contend that it is a gross insult to the soldiers themselves to assume that they desire any such favors. The great body of veterans have never made any such request. This proposal is, in part at least, the suggestion of those who

hope to win popularity by advocating it. But I trust that the men who went to fight for their nation without any thought of reward, and who feel it recompense enough to have served and saved the country, will reject such appeals to their selfish interests.

2. The second objection to this measure is that it is an indirect attack on the principle of civil service reform. This reform is working so well that those who dislike it, but are afraid to assail it openly, make use of the popularity of the soldiers to break it down. The civil service rules take the offices away from partisan leaders, and open them to the whole community. Those whose chief stock in trade has consisted in managing the offices now find themselves without influence. They hope to regain it by this plan, and to bring back the times when offices were given, not to those fitted for their duties, but to those who could secure most votes for their party.

3. The third objection to this proposal is that it is anti-American. It will create a privileged class among us, exempted from the conditions of the rest of the community. Soldiers, of all men, need least to be thus set apart as a distinct order. And I repeat that this proposal did not originate with the soldiers themselves. Some may have been led to indorse it, but it is not a soldiers' movement. Our veterans have no desire to be made into an aristocracy or an order apart from others. If they saw the danger hidden in these plausible requests which others make for them, I think they would indignantly refuse such favors. The danger is real. We are drifting away from republican simplicity. Government is asked to pension our Presidents,

to erect costly monuments to our heroes, to increase indefinitely the vast sums paid in pensions. Washington sleeps in his simple tomb at Mt. Vernon, his great memory shedding a halo around the lowly resting-place. Abraham Lincoln lies at Springfield, and he needs no pile of marble to make us remember that he was the savior of the nation and the emancipator of a race. Grant's fame is forever enshrined in his deeds and in the history which records them. What will he or the nation gain by having two hundred and fifty thousand dollars put into a heap of stone? Each of these heroes can say, "Exegi monumentum ære perennius." How much more touching to the imagination and the heart is the lonely tumulus at Marathon or the sacred mound at Waterloo than the costly statues of admirals and generals which crowd Westminster Abbey, where the bad taste of the art is only matched by the insignificance of the subject!

The system of pensions in the Old World has grown to such corrupt excess that it has been opposed by all sound statesmanship. Here we seem inclined to let it go all lengths. Certainly, no one objects to the national hospitals, where disabled veterans are supported in comfort as long as they live. No one complains when needy soldiers and their widows are provided for by the nation. But the system of pensions has now outstripped all possibility of being regulated. Last year, sixty-five millions of dollars were distributed among three hundred and forty-five thousand nominal pensioners. How large a part of this went to pension agents or into the pockets of those who never saw a field of battle, no one can tell. The

effect, on the whole, of giving away such vast amounts of money as a gratuity from the pockets of the taxpayers must be demoralizing. As to pensioning Presidents and their widows from the public funds, it is, perhaps, enough to say that this had better be postponed till it becomes difficult to find persons willing to accept the Presidential office. We have not reached the condition of England, where Lord Salisbury is to receive $25,000 a year during life for having occupied the office of Premier during three months, but we are rapidly moving in that direction.

All the money which Congress can vote for such purposes as these comes from the taxes paid by the whole people, and ought to be used for the good of the whole people. Members of Congress have no right to vote it away to gratify their own tastes, or to make themselves popular with their constituents, or because they think the appropriation is for a useful object. It must be shown to be for the real benefit of the people and for something which they cannot do for themselves. A light-house on the Atlantic may be only an indirect benefit to a farmer in Wisconsin, yet it is a real benefit; for it is a necessity for commerce, and the commerce of the country brings comforts to every man's door. But a monument to Grant may be built by his friends and admirers, if they choose. They have not chosen to do it, probably because they thought a monument would add nothing to his renown. Why, then, should the people be taxed to do that which the friends of the hero have decided to be unsuitable or unnecessary? Perhaps these friends agree with Campbell: —

"What hallows ground where heroes sleep?
'Tis not the sculptured piles you heap.

. . . . . .

"But strew his ashes to the wind
Whose sword or voice has served mankind,
And is he dead, whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."

The European principle has been that as much as possible should be done for the people by the government: our principle has been that as much as possible should be done by the people for themselves. Our system develops energy and manliness: the European method keeps the people in a state of infancy. The European system teaches the people that government can and ought to cure all social evils. If they suffer, it is the fault of the State; and, therefore, they hope to help themselves by a revolution. They wish the government to provide them with work, to determine the amount of wages, to fix the price of food, and to make provision for all needs. Ignorant Europeans bring to this country the same notion of the omnipotence of the State. The greenback agitation which prevailed a few years since rested on the belief that, if the State issued a large amount of paper money, every one would be able to get some of it. The advocates of such schemes do not see that, when you increase the amount of the currency, you raise the price of everything in proportion. Double the amount of dollars in circulation, and each becomes worth only half as much. This is not mere theory, but it is what all of us who have lived long enough have seen happen over and

over again. In times of inflation, some speculators will make fortunes; but it is not the working people,— they always suffer. As Horace says: —

"Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi."
(Whenever the leaders blunder, the people have to pay for it.)

Is it not time, then, to stop this downward career, which is taking the strength and manliness out of the people, and to return to the old maxim, that the government is best which governs least?

I should not do justice to my own convictions if I closed this paper without suggesting how largely this custom of depending on the government for aid has come from the protective system, which has taken such an immense development in our time. At first, it was only applied to infant industries, which the government was called on to foster until they should harden into the bone of manhood. But their manhood has come; and, instead of needing less aid, they require more. A powerful body of manufacturers and producers have combined to demand that the people shall be taxed to support their special industries. It is the power of this ring which has made it impossible to reduce the duties on such raw materials as iron ore, pig iron, wood, lumber, which are the basis of so many manufactures. I only say here that, whether this system be right or wrong, it is fast educating the nation to the belief that the business of the State is to interfere in the industrial pursuits of the people, and that, whenever Congress believes that one or another manufacture needs its aid, it has a right to help it from the national resources. On the theory that Congress is able to decide

what industries need assistance, and that such occupations have a right to governmental interference, protection is piled on protection till the native energy of the people is likely to be seriously impaired. There appears to be no limit in the application of this protective principle. While manufacturers demand protection on the one hand, the raw material which they use calls for protection on the other. At last, when everything is protected, it will be found that nothing is protected; for what is received by the right hand is paid out again by the left. One evil result, however, must certainly remain: that the nation has been taught to look for support, not to its own enterprise, but to the help of the State. And this disease it will take a long time to cure.

Recent Discussions concerning Conscience and its Development.

FEW subjects have been recently more discussed, both in this country and in Europe, than conscience in man, and its relation to universal law. What is conscience? Is it a moral instinct, an intuition; or is it the result of education and experience? Is conscience the voice of God in the soul; or the voice of our own character and our own belief, determined by the past education of our lives, combined with tendencies inherited in our organization? What is its authority? Is it an absolute standard, always infallibly correct; or the mere sum of our opinions concerning duty, which we have attained as we have reached the rest of our belief? Is it not, after all, often a matter of taste and personal choice? Do we not call it our duty to do that which we wish to do? Do we not sometimes

> "Compound for sins we are inclined to
> By damning those we have no mind to"?

Before we can decide such questions, we must see what facts there are in regard to conscience which are indisputable, and therefore undisputed.

In all times, and among all nations, so far as we know, the idea of duty has existed among men. Everywhere, men believe not only that some things are pleasant and others unpleasant, but that some

things are right and others wrong. In the thousand languages of mankind, words are to be found which mean "ought" and "ought not," "right and wrong," "sin and sinner," "responsibility," "reward," "punishment," "remorse," "penitence." No one ever thinks of confounding these words with those which express the feelings belonging to pleasure and pain, desire and regret. Continually, we hear such expressions as these: "I wish I could do it, but it would not be right"; "I had a great deal rather do something else, but I think I ought to do this."

No one ever confuses in his mind or his practice these two classes of feelings. We often do what is wrong from ignorance. We also often refuse to obey our conscience, and do what we know we ought not to do. But no one, except an idiot or a metaphysician, ever failed to see the distinction between these two classes of sentiments in his soul. Pleasure is not the same thing as duty, remorse is essentially different from regret.

A second fact is equally certain: when these two sets of motives are in conflict with each other, the one always has the supremacy. When I say, "I wish I could do this, but I believe I ought to do that," no one doubts on which side is the voice of command. The one persuades, the other orders. This made the great philosopher Kant give to conscience the name of the categorical, or unconditional, imperative, and to affirm that by this voice of command within us we know God. For who or what else can require of us implicit, entire obedience but the Supreme Being? It is not our own will which speaks, for that would

often tell us to do something which we should like better. It is the voice in the soul of some will higher than our will, which has a right to command and to require our absolute and entire obedience. We have no right to refuse the voice of duty, but we have a perfect right to relinquish the object of desire. We may deny ourselves pleasures, or choose between them according to our taste; but we must not refuse what is right, no matter what our distaste to it may be.

When the voice of conscience is obeyed, it gives us a peculiar sense of inward satisfaction, quite different from the gratification of our desires. The pleasure of gratified desire is soon over, that of a satisfied conscience endures. The one belongs to the element of time and change, the other to that of eternity and permanence. Again, pain or sorrow for what is merely loss or suffering soon passes away of itself; but the sense of having done wrong abides in the soul till it is relieved by repentance and pardon from on high.

The sense of pleasure or pain corresponds largely with the quantity of pleasure enjoyed or pain suffered. But ever so small a sin, when seen to be a sin, ever so little wrong, known to be wrong, arouses the same remorse which comes from a larger offence. A friend once told me that, when he was in a rather gloomy and depressed state of mind, he went out of his way to do a very little act of kindness. Immediately, he felt a sense of peace come into his soul. He said to himself, "I have the power, then, of doing a thing because it is right." That made him happy.

The Christian martyrs suffered themselves to be torn

with rods and thrown to the lions, rather than deny their Master or worship the image of the emperor. Our soul is thrilled at the authority of conscience shown in such acts as these. But here is a little girl who has taken a book from the table, which she has been forbidden to have. Her mother looks at her, and says, "Put that back, dear; you know you ought not to have it." The little one stops; tears come into her eyes; she hesitates a moment; finally, she conquers herself, and puts it down. The great chord of duty, reaching from heaven to earth, which vibrated when the martyr died, gives a like thrill of divine harmony at the child's little act of self-denial.

> "There is neither great nor small
> To the soul which moves in all."

Whatever it may have been originally, it is evident that right is not the same thing as enjoyment *now*, nor wrong the same thing as pain. There is an impassable gulf fixed between them in every man's consciousness. Righteousness may *lead* to happiness; but in themselves, and as motives of action, righteousness and happiness are very different.

In what, then, does an act of righteousness consist? Three elements enter into it:—

1. *The moral sense*, or the perception of the distinction between right and wrong.

2. *Ethical knowledge*, or a belief that a certain act is right, and another wrong.

3. *Moral freedom*, or the power to choose the right, and refuse the wrong.

In other words, we must know there is such a thing

as right and wrong; we must believe what we are doing to be right; and we must have the power to do it.

This conviction in the soul of an absolute commanding righteousness, to which we can cleave in the wild rush of passion, the mad conflicts of desire, amid the influences of worldly opinion, selfish custom, or the blind forces of nature,— this is an anchor to the soul. This is the place which Archimedes sought for outside the world, from whence he could move the world. This is the light which lightens every man who comes into the world. The philosopher Kant, before mentioned, in words often quoted, said of this, "Two things there are which, the oftener and more steadily they are considered, fill my mind with an ever-new reverence and awe,— the starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me."

Thus far, all schools of thought agree. Those who contend that everything in our consciousness consists of transformed sensations, readily admit that *now* all men have a sense of right and possess intuitive convictions concerning the moral law. Prof. Clifford, a determined evolutionist, says, "When Socrates puzzled the Greeks by asking them what they meant by goodness, justice, and virtue, the very use of the words showed that the people, as a whole, had a moral sense, and felt that certain things were right and others wrong." He also grants the authority of conscience, saying "that the dictates of the moral law must be obeyed or disobeyed by every human being who is not hopelessly and forever separated from the rest of mankind." By which, I suppose he means that every man must choose between obedience or disobedience to the

moral law. Shakspere, whose writings are the best mirror of the conduct and motives of mankind, constantly shows the power and function of conscience. He shows it active in every type of character, from the highest to the lowest; in Lady Macbeth, trying in vain to forget the murder of the old king; and in Launcelot, in "The Merchant of Venice," debating with himself whether or not to run away from his master. "The fiend tempts me," he says, "saying, 'Good Launcelot, run!' My conscience says, 'No! do not run,'" and so on. He makes the conscience of Macbeth place before him the airy dagger, and Richard to tremble in his sleep, dreaming of his victims. He speaks of the "gnawing worm of conscience," the "wild sea of conscience," the "testimony of a good conscience," "the thing within us called conscience," "quiet given to a wounded conscience," "an armor buckled on by conscience," "conscience that makes cowards of us" when we are doing wrong, and conscience that makes us bold to do right. I find that Shakspere uses the word conscience one hundred and eighteen times, showing that to his mind it was a constant element in the human soul.

The New Testament attests the power of conscience in man. Especially does the Apostle Paul show continually his belief in the universal presence of this faculty. "I have lived in all good conscience," he says. "My rejoicing is this: the testimony of my conscience that I have lived in simplicity and godly sincerity." "I have endeavored to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man." He believed that the Gentiles, who had no outward law, had "a law

written in their hearts," which approved or condemned their conduct.

Thus we find a universal consent to the presence in the human soul of this commanding power, which shows man that he is the minister and servant of a truth above himself; that he is under the control of an invisible law of righteousness; and that he has the power to resist evil and do good, the power to fight against and conquer his temptations, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

How did we come by this power? How was conscience born? To this, only two answers can be given. It either came from below or from above. It is either an influx from on high, the voice of God within us, or it is a natural development from some lower form of life. If "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light," then this power is a divine power,—the light of God within us, graciously sent to lead his children to himself.

But there is a school of teachers who believe that everything in the consciousness consists of "transformed sensations." Reason, love, imagination, faith, were once sensations of pain and pleasure, but by a slow process have grown up into what they now are. This hypothesis is innocent, provided we weight it with one or two conditions. The first depends on the fact that there can be no evolution without a previous involution. What is to be unrolled must be previously rolled up. The tree, which comes from a seed, must be potentially in the seed before; and no process of development with which we are acquainted would

evolve an oak from a grain of sand. If the solar system came from a nebula, as it may have done, then all that is now there must have been there originally. Either this, or else a continual influx of new elements into nature. There must be a Creator at the beginning, or a Creator all the way along, or both.

Of these two theories, the last seems to me the one to be preferred. One shows us a Creator who acts only on the rudiments of things, gives only the initial impulse, sets in motion a series of causes which work according to foreordained laws, and who watches their operation from above. This makes him too much like an earthly workman, who creates a machine, and then leaves it to work by itself. The other idea is of a Being who never ceases from his creative activity, from whom life forever flows into nature and into the human soul, whose regular and constant methods of action constitute what we call the laws of nature. According to this view, if the world was developed from a nebula, then God was present along the whole line of that evolution, and by a perpetual spiritual influx carried it upward and onward. This seems to be the hypothesis most worthy of an infinite Creator. He is the perpetual fountain of life, the constant support of the world; and he is best revealed by the highest and best moments of our being. Every pulsation of generosity, every movement of unselfish devotion, every heroic impulse, every aspiration of faith, is from above. God never interrupts the course of nature, for he is the course of nature. And this awful voice of conscience, this absolute authority of the moral law in the soul,— this is the constant pres-

ence within of the power, not ourselves, and above ourselves, which makes for righteousness.

But, if so, it may be said, Why is conscience so often wrong? Why does it make such mistakes? Why do equally conscientious men differ as to what is right? Why are men conscientiously intolerant and bigoted? Paul was as conscientious when he persecuted the Christians as afterward, when he preached the gospel. How can the faculty be divine which is capable of such perversion as this?

I said before that, in every right act, there are three elements,—the moral sense, which prompts us to do right, the intellectual perception of what is right, and the free effort of the will to perform it. The divine element — that which we will venture to call a power transcending sense, and coming direct from God — is the idea of duty, the presence of "I ought" in the soul. That is not the result of a long growth. It lightens every man who comes into the world. But the second element, the knowledge of what is right, is the result of ever-increasing thought and investigation. This is slowly developed in the individual man and the race. Here, the process of evolution comes in, which shows how every increase of moral insight as well as every habit of virtue is preserved by the force of hereditary transmission. Some great moral truths are universally seen. They are recognized on the tombs of ancient Egypt, in the earliest scriptures of the Buddhists, in the islands of Polynesia, among the African tribes, when first seen by the European missionary. The law of truth and the law of love are everywhere acknowledged. But the practical applica-

tion of these laws comes by experience. The knowledge of what is right and the power habitually to choose the right are the results of social development. In this sense, the conscience of a race may be gradually elevated, till the virtues of a Fénelon become the habit of a whole people.

The idea of duty includes that of power. The command to do right and not wrong involves freedom to do right or to do wrong. But here come in other difficulties. Is man really free to choose the good and refuse the evil? Many thinkers are unable to believe this, and on different grounds. Some say a man's character is determined by his organization, not by his choice. It depends on who his ancestors were, not on his own efforts. All thought results from the molecular action of the brain, say others. The brain secretes thought, will, choice. Others say that the uniformity of law demands that behind every action there shall be a motive, and to the strongest motive the will must yield. And others argue from the ascertained facts of averages that crime and virtue do not depend on human will, but on the state of society.

Of course, we have not time to consider these difficulties; but one or two statements may show that they have not the weight that is often supposed.

Let us at once grant, what is evidently true, that every man's character is the result of at least three factors. Giving to freedom of the will its full power, it cannot certainly wholly create or change human character. We are born with certain temperaments, passions, tendencies. Every little child shows very soon a special character of its own, and he will retain

this all his life, more or less. Physical organization is one factor of character, which begins when we are born, goes with us as long as we live, and only ceases to act with our last breath.

Organization is one factor,—call it the molecular action of the brain, or by any other name. The second influence which goes to make character is education, and that is almost as irresistible as organization. Take two infants with exactly the same organization, and let one grow up in Sumatra, and the other on a farm in Vermont, and they must become very different persons.

So much we fully admit. Now we ask, Is this all? The answer given by facts and observation is "No." There is a third factor of character which may work or may not. It is free choice, or the self-determining power. It is the man's own effort. It appears in his determination to do all he ought; to become all God meant him to be; to make use of every opportunity; to waste no time; to live a sober, pure, righteous life; to cultivate his powers, and grow up in all things toward an ideal standard. This is what we call freedom of choice. This constitutes the domain, and these are the powers, of human freedom.

But this faculty of freedom is practically inefficient unless it have some ideal standard of truth. Man has the faculty of free choice by nature, but it does not make him free until he exercises it and pursues a fixed aim. The loftier the aim, the more free he becomes. Human freedom is, therefore, not one thing in all men. It is not absolute, but relative. It is the power of choosing good and refusing evil. To do this, one must

have the knowledge of good and evil, and the will to exercise that power. The natural faculty which we call the self-determining power in man may do nothing, do much or more. Freedom is a thing of more or less.

The majority of men in most communities have no strong purpose or distinct ideal aim. They have no high object of life which they steadily pursue. They drift rather than steer. Therefore, their conscience follows the public opinion around them; their characters are moulded by the usual influence of society. Their freedom is then small. To them, the law of averages will certainly apply; and it is only to this portion of the community that this law does apply. The average number of letters put into the post, which the writers have forgotten to direct, is said to be about the same every year. True. But this only means that there are about so many careless letter-writers in the place, *not* that every individual in the place is obliged by a mysterious law to forget to direct one in so many letters. Some persons have risen above that necessity, and commit no such mistakes. The average number of suicides, burglaries, and wife-murders in the city of Paris, M. Quetelet has found to be nearly the same, year in and year out. That proves that, in Paris, there is always a large population existing in a depressed state; that there is a large dangerous class there, a large class who drift and do not steer. To them, the law of averages applies. But this does not prove that every man in Paris runs a certain percentage of danger of committing suicide or committing a murder. There is probably another large class in Paris who are in no danger of either. The law of averages means that every man is likely to commit a mistake or a crime in

the direction in which he does not guide his life by a sense of duty, or has not guarded it by a fit education. I myself may very possibly run every year a certain definite risk of not directing my letters. In that matter, I am subject to the law of averages. But I am in no possible danger, I suppose, of committing a burglary. In that direction, I think I am free from the dominion of the law of averages.

Prof. Huxley has declared his opinion that man is an automaton, a machine, in whom every choice and act is determined by mechanical forces, and not by any imaginary ruling power called self, or freedom of will. A volition, he says, is not caused by a "masterful *ego*," but by hidden mechanical forces, by cerebral molecular movements. He compares man with an ingeniously contrived clock; and, as the hands of the clock obey hidden forces behind, so our thoughts and volitions obey hidden movements of the brain and nerves within. This theory, identical with that of La Mettrie, published more than a century ago, destroys the basis of morality, and is pure materialism. It regards the total contents of consciousness as the result of movements of matter. But, fortunately for our belief in freedom, these molecular movements are "hidden" movements; that is to say, movements of which neither Huxley nor any one else knows anything. The theory reduces itself to this: "I believe," says Prof. Huxley, "that man would turn out to be a machine if I could only know something of which I now know nothing."

There is another form of the doctrine of necessity which is not materialism,— that of Mill, Bain, Clifford, and others,— namely, that a volition is an effect following necessarily a corresponding moral cause, and that

the same motive in the same circumstances will be followed by the same moral action. And this, it is thought, is demanded by the uniformity of law. If man could escape the uniform action of cause and effect by an effort of will, it is feared it would introduce chance into the universe, and destroy the uniformity of nature.

I reply that this is merely a logical argument as against a matter of fact. Our consciousness assures us that we are not bound by the strongest motive, in the sense in which the stone is bound to fall in the direction of the least resistance. We know, by the voice of universal human consciousness, that we are always free to choose, to consent to a motive or resist it. Whether we are able to carry our freedom of choice out into freedom of action depends on the force of habit, the pressure of outward influence, and the like. But we are always free to choose, to try, to do our best; or to refuse, to submit, not to make an effort. It is for this choice and effort that we are responsible: this is in our power, the outward result is not always in our power.

In this respect of freedom, man is a supernatural being, able to escape the domain of purely physical law. He is a creator, like God, able to add new spiritual forces to those already in the world. Such souls as Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Channing, have increased the actual sum of moral force among men. They have advanced human progress by hundreds of years. But all this was no violation of law. It was not the introduction of caprice or chance into the world. A wilful or capricious will is not really free. It accomplishes nothing. A man escapes the dominion of lower laws by submitting willingly to higher laws. Until we are

ready to obey the law of duty and right, we are subject to the lower influences of custom and desire. Human freedom, in its active and effectual state, consists in being free from the dominion of lower motives which warp and narrow the soul, and accepting the sway of the higher motives which enlarge and vitalize it. This freedom comes by exercise: it is not born in us, nor suddenly created in us. "Herein do I exercise myself, to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man."

We escape from the control of law only by fulfilling law in love. The truth makes us free, and love makes us free. All knowledge emancipates us. Love alone is full emancipation.

> "Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security."

When we love right, and practise it because we love it, duty is transfigured and becomes perfect freedom.

Meantime, this wonderful idea of right, planted deep in every human reason, binds each human soul to God, so that it must belong to him forever. As the law and force of gravitation bind every atom of matter to God, and are, in fact, the power of God holding the whole universe in his hand, so the idea of duty in the mind is God's power holding every soul by the great moral gravitation of the spiritual world. This prevents any soul from being finally and forever lost. It cannot wholly die, so long as the ideas of right and duty are not extinguished. These ideas testify that it still belongs to God. As long as man is capable of remorse, he is bound to the infinite Love by an adamantine chain. He is still God's child, and, though a great way off, his Father always sees him.

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF PRAYER.

THE subject of which I shall next speak is "The Scientific Basis of Prayer." It is often supposed that science is hostile to faith in the efficacy of prayer. It is supposed that an answer to prayer implies an interruption in the order of nature. If God should answer our prayers, he must do it by suspending the operation of law. But the very foundation of science is belief in the permanence of law. Astronomy would not be a science if the law of gravitation might be interrupted in any instance. Any such interruption of law would introduce an element of uncertainty into every astronomical calculation. The same thing is true in all the sciences. No scientific man can believe in a miracle, if a miracle means a violation of law. Nor can he believe in any real answer to prayer, if that answer means an interruption of the course of cause and effect.

Some persons try to escape the force of this argument by saying that by means of prayer man puts himself into a state of mind in which good things come to him more easily. God does not answer the prayer, the man answers it himself. The only result of prayer is that it reacts on the soul to its benefit. But this way of reasoning is not to defend prayer, but to surrender it. If we ceased to believe that God hears and

answers prayer, prayer would be a deliberate self-deception. On this theory, self-communion and meditation would take the place of supplication, as being more honest.

It is a fact, however, which science must take into account, that in all times and lands, among all races, in every stage of culture, human beings have sought help from an unseen world. How is this fact to be explained? It is said sometimes that such a habit of prayer comes from human weakness and superstition. Not being able to help themselves in any other way, men sought aid from the unseen world. Yes; but why do they continue to seek it if it never comes? If all experience shows that no good is ever gained by praying, why does the delusion continue? Why is not prayer outgrown? Other delusions are exposed, and come to an end; but this remains, and has remained, a permanent activity of the soul for thousands of years. Prayer is the very heart of religion. Every religion of mankind has taught the power of prayer. Brahminism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Judaism,—all teach men to pray. In ancient times, men prayed in Persia to Ormazd, in India to Vishnu, in Egypt to Osiris, in Greece to the gods of Olympus, in Rome to the gods of the Pantheon. And Jesus, as we know, also inculcated the duty and the power of prayer.

A traveller tells us that in the city of Lassa the Buddhists hold prayer-meetings every evening in the open squares. In Mohammedan countries, at the hour of prayer, the sailor prays on the deck of his ship, the merchant in his shop, the laborer in the street.

For a few minutes, all business is suspended, and the whole population turns its thought upward to the invisible realm of Deity. In Roman Catholic countries, men and women passing a church turn in, kneel on the floor, and go out again, with a little more rest and peace in their soul. The day must come when Protestant churches shall also be open for daily prayer and meditation.

There has been a practical unanimity among religious teachers of every sect, name, and opinion, on this point. All have inculcated the value and use of prayer. Deduct as large a percentage as you think reasonable for the force of custom, habits of belief, inculcated prejudices, and the like, the testimony of universal religion to the power which resides in prayer will remain a fact of great significance, and one not to be neglected by scientific observers. The substance of this testimony is that results are obtained by means of prayer which cannot be realized without it.

And now look for a moment at the objection that, if prayer is actually answered,— that is, if any actual result is thus obtained,— it implies a suspension or interruption of law. This objection rests on a misunderstanding. When the volcanoes in the East threw stones and ashes miles upward, no one imagined that the law of gravitation was suspended.

Mr. George P. Marsh published a book on *Physical Nature as modified by Human Action.* He showed how the will of man has changed the face of the world. Man cuts down forests and dries up rivers, and so changes fruitful regions into a wilderness. He dams up the streams, and distributes the water over desert

plains, and makes the wilderness to blossom as the rose. But no one assumes that the laws of physical geography have been suspended by human influence, though their outcome has been thus modified. Proceeding from that mysterious centre of hidden force,— the soul,— this power of human will modifies the external world. What the advocates of prayer assert is this : that the same force of will, proceeding from the same living centre of energy, but turned inward toward God in prayer, may modify the results of spiritual law. In other words, it is a part of the order of the universe that the will of man, exerted outwardly, in co-operation with natural laws, shall modify their results in nature; and exerted inwardly, in co-operation with spiritual laws, shall modify their results in the soul. Thus, prayer is a real force, when it works in accordance with law, but not otherwise.

If we turn to the teachings of Jesus on this subject, we shall notice that he constantly indicates that prayer, to be effectual, must act in accordance with law. Prayer is not addressed to any divine caprice. It depends on fixed conditions. The condition which includes all others is that we shall be in a Christian attitude of soul. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name" (that is, "in my spirit") "he will give it to you."

This one condition includes several, of which Jesus speaks separately. One is, not to pray "to be seen of men,"— that is, to exclude all thoughts of what others think of our prayer; for such thoughts change its

direction, turning it downward and outward, instead of inward and upward. "Thou, when thou prayest, go into thy closet, and pray to thy Father in secret." Private, solitary prayer must have the upward direction. A man may pray in public, provided his thoughts keep that upward direction, but not otherwise. Another condition is faith. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Unless we believe that prayer is a real power, by which some actual result can be obtained, it will degenerate into an empty form. Unless we believe in it as a force, it will not be a force. And, again, no selfish prayer — that is, one which ends in our private good — can be effectual; because this is opposed to the law, "Give, and it shall be given you." We must receive, in order to give. We must pray in harmony with the nature of God, which is love. A sick man may pray for health, but that this health may be of use to others as well as to himself.

Jesus says, "When ye pray, use no vain repetitions, nor think to be heard for your much speaking." To say so many prayers a day, to count off your prayers on a rosary, to repeat over and over again the same words,— all this tends to turn the thought from the substance of prayer to its form. We then think of the outward words, and the inward life of the prayer is weakened. In prayer, we must, first and last, have integrity, reality, truth. Without this, it is only a shell without a kernel.

This shows that Jesus regarded prayer, not as opposed to law, but as working in harmony with certain spiritual laws and conditions.

The conditions of effectual prayer may be summed up thus : (1) We must pray in truth,— that is, we must ask for what we really wish. (2) We must pray in spirit,— that is, we must ask for the right thing. (3) We must pray in faith, believing that our prayers will be heard and answered.

It often happens that, though we may mean to be sincere and honest in our prayer, we are misled by custom, and so lapse unconsciously into the prayer of form. In public prayer, whether in a liturgy or without it, we are often called on to join in aspirations which belong only to the highest spiritual state. People come into church with minds harassed with worldly cares and duties, vexed by ill-treatment, with little hope or courage or faith in their souls ; and they are asked to join, not in the prayer of sinners, but in that of saints. We are called on to express the most rapt devotion, when we hardly feel the Divine Presence at all ; to express remorse for sin, when our sense of sin is very slight. When full of life and energy, we are asked to sing,—

> "Fain would I quit this weary road,
> And sleep in death, to live with God."

Often, we find our thoughts wander, and we take no interest in the supplication or adoration. Then we blame ourselves ; but, in truth, we are not so much to be blamed. It is best to be honest always, and it is our honesty which prevents us from joining in thoughts which are not ours. The prayers which Jesus commended were honest prayers, and usually short ones, like that of the publican, who only said, "Lord, be

merciful to me a sinner"; and the Roman, who said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Like them, let us always ask for what we really wish; not for what we think we ought to wish; not for that for which others ask; not for what it is usual to ask. We must always have truth, as a condition of real prayer.

Next, we must pray in the spirit; that is, ask for what is really good. We need, every day of our lives, inward spiritual power, in order to do our daily work. We need a new infusion in our souls of good temper, wisdom, courage, fidelity, peace, faith, modesty, temperance. We shall be likely else to be vexed, put out of temper, led to say unkind words, to postpone our duties, to do harm, not good, to others. Therefore, we can always ask for a good spirit to be imparted to our souls. This is the daily bread we need most of all. In asking for this, we are sure we are asking for the right thing, and therefore can ask in faith.

In asking for any outward blessing, we are never sure that we are seeking for the best thing. There is no harm in praying, and in praying earnestly, that God may spare the life of one we love; but, then, we must in all such cases add, as Jesus did, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." It may be in accordance with divine law that we shall receive even such a blessing as this, in consequence of our prayer. We send for our wise and kind physician when our child is ill, because we know that he may help the child. So prayer may help the child. But the physician may fail, and prayer may fail; for God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thought than our thoughts.

Thus it is in asking for outward blessings. But when we ask for an inward blessing, for power to do good, we may be sure that this prayer accords with universal law, and will never be breathed in vain.

All science rests on the basis of observation, induction, and experience. It first collects its facts, then groups these facts according to law, then verifies the law by new experiments. And this is the foundation of our faith in prayer. We first observe the fact of the universality of prayer, showing that man stands in a relation of dependence to an unseen world. Next, we study the conditions of prayer, to learn what are its laws; and we verify the truth of those laws by our personal experience. When we really feel the need of divine help, we pray. We put out of our mind vanity, the thoughts of human praise and censure, all self-deception, and ask our heavenly Father to help us to rise out of our dreary and empty life into his strength and peace. We ask him to take away our anxieties, and give us trust and hope. We ask him to lead us into kind and friendly relations with those about us. We ask him to make us faithful, honest, true in our daily work.

The answer to these prayers may not be any perceptible emotion or remarkable change. We are no more conscious of the influence of the Spirit than we are of the working of our brain or our heart. A spiritual energy may come into the soul when we pray, modifying our feelings, our purposes, our convictions, but only known by its results. After a while, we feel that the distraction and distress of our soul are gone, that we are fit for work, able to meet the demands of the soul. We

know not whence the wind comes, nor whither it goes; but its soft breath fans our cheek, its murmur is heard in the tops of the pine-trees. The hot air of the summer day is cooled. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. By this personal experience, we verify the law according to which prayer is answered.

In physical science, it is not necessary for each man to test the truth of a law by new experiments. Being once proved to the satisfaction of experts, it is accepted by others on their authority. But spiritual laws, working in the region of the soul, can only be verified by each one for himself. A man of science once proposed as a prayer-test that a hospital should be selected, and that believers in prayer should pray for the sick in that hospital, to see if it would have a larger percentage of recovery than a hospital not prayed for. This, however, would be no test at all; for one of the essential conditions of true prayer would be wanting,—that is, sincerity. Such a prayer would not be offered from a wish that the sick should recover, but from the wish to know if prayer was efficacious. When we pray sincerely for what we really desire, and pray in the spirit of Christ, we shall then be able to verify, each one for himself, the reality of this spiritual power.

It is sometimes said, "To work is to pray." But this statement implies a confusion of thought. To work is to turn the energy of the mind to outward men and things, to pray is to turn it inward toward the Spirit and God. The two movements of the soul make the complete life. They are supplementary, not the same. When we are working, we are under a sense of responsibility; when praying, we are in a spirit of dependence.

Prayer and work make the two halves of a good life. All true prayer leads to work, and all good work leads to prayer. They are mutually helpful, but not the same.

What will be the prayer of the future? It will have less of the form and more of the spirit: it will be less tied to hours and methods, but more full of the sense of a divine presence. It will be more childlike, simple, sincere. The child puts its hand into that of its father and mother, and walks secure in their double love. But it does not ask them to protect it: it feels itself protected. Thus, the evolution of prayer will lead to what the Scripture calls "living in the Spirit" and "walking in the Spirit." When we have a sense of the Divine Presence and Love, we open our souls without words to that inspiration, we feel beneath us the everlasting arms, we walk overshadowed by a divine tenderness. We do not need to go into a cloister to pray. Our prayer

> "is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed."

The prayer of mere form is passing away, but the prayer of the spirit is increasing more and more. The soul, conscious of a divine presence in nature and life, waits on the Lord, and renews its strength.

THE MEANING AND VALUE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT THIS TIME.

THE Lord's Supper is the most ancient, the most universal, the most authentic of Christian institutions. The simplest of all at first, it has been developed step by step into the most mysterious sacrament, every one of its original incidents having been changed or dropped. At first only a feast of loving memory, it has been made the battle-ground of violent, bitter controversy. But it survives all these changes, and in some form or other remains a touching service, in which we remember Jesus as a personal friend, in which we unite lovingly with all who love the common Master, in which we gather up strength for new duties, and endeavor to resist any current which may be sweeping us away from the old landmarks of faith and goodness.

There are some, however, who think that the time for this institution has passed by, that it may now be laid aside. In several of the Churches,—I know not how many,—it has ceased to exist; in many more where it is continued, it has a feeble and uncertain life. Many excellent people and sincere Christians do not attend this particular service, while they make a point of being regular at the rest. This is partly owing to their not precisely seeing the meaning of the use of

it; partly because they think it looks like a profession of some faith they do not have; partly because it seems to them to be claiming some kind of superior piety; or, sometimes, because they think they are not good enough to partake of this ordinance. There is, no doubt, an increasing indifference to it in most of the Churches called liberal. I therefore think it well that we should consider seriously the question, "Has the Lord's Supper any meaning and value now?" and, if so, "What is its meaning, and what its use?"

Let us first, however, look at its origin, and see what it was in the beginning. The account of its institution by Jesus rests on the most solid foundation. It is not only given with remarkable uniformity in the first three Gospels, but also almost in the same form in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. That letter of Paul is much older than the Gospels, and its authenticity has never been disputed by any school of critics. Even Strauss admits without question that the supper was founded by Jesus. The whole account of it is natural and simple. There are no miraculous portents, no mystery, no difficult doctrine. It is fully marked with the character of Jesus,—his affection for his disciples, his wish to comfort them, his wish to be remembered by them, his enjoyment of the feast, his gladness in partaking it.

All this remains; but the form has changed entirely, and in all Churches, Catholic and Protestant. Inwardly, the Lord's Supper is what it was at first, a meeting of the friends of Jesus to remember him. Outwardly, it has been altered in all respects. It was instituted on Thursday, in the evening. We keep it on Sunday, in

the morning or afternoon. It was a cheerful feast, at which there was meat; at which the wine was mixed with water in large bowls, and probably drunk standing; in which the bread was like our ship biscuit. They stood or sat round a table, and conversed together, asking and answering questions. Jesus talked with them in the most familiar way, illustrating his teaching by the humble images of a vine bearing grapes, a shepherd leading his flock, an open door by which children could go into the house and see their Father. This took place in a private room, the upper room of a house. Luther, with his genial sense of nature and love for reality, says: "It was just cheerful, pleasant table-talk between Jesus and his disciples. Never since the world began has there been such a happy meal as that."

When we next hear of it, it was the same thing. It was in Corinth, in a church made up mostly of heathen converts. Paul says he had given them an account of this feast; and it seems they made of it a kind of picnic or basket festival, in which each family took its meals by itself, eating and drinking, and so the sense of a common brotherhood was lost. Paul tells them that, when Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body," he meant them to feel while they took it that the were all one in him. "We, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of one bread." "Now we are the body of Christ, and members one of another."

The pendulum of thought swings first to one extreme and then to the opposite. At first, when Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me," it was a happy but

serious feast, in which all were united in one thought and love. Then, at Corinth, twenty years after, it swung to the extreme of selfish amusement and self-indulgence. Then it swung back to the other extreme, and became an awful sacrament, surrounded with mystery; and those who partook it on their knees believed they had God himself on their lips. Then, among the descendants of the Puritans, it was considered a privilege granted to the converted only, which is the very opposite idea to that of Jesus, that "those who are whole do not need a physician, but those who are sick."

No reason for not attending the communion is more frequently given than this: "I do not think I am good enough." But, if the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to make us good, I should think that those who feel thus are the very ones to come. If a man thinks he is good enough to come, then he is too good to come. Suppose a sick man should refuse to call a physician, because he was not ill enough. Suppose a man should refuse to eat, because he was hungry. Suppose a boy should decline going to school, because he had not a perfect knowledge of everything taught there. The proper qualification for a student is ignorance, combined with a desire to learn; the proper qualification for taking one's meals is hunger; the proper ground for calling in a physician is that we are unwell; and the true reason for wishing to come into communion with Christ is that we are not as good as we should like to be.

No doubt there are some who are deterred from joining in this feast of sacred memory by an honest

fear lest they should seem to be professing more belief in Christ than they really have. But what sort of a belief does any one profess by this act? Absolutely none, except faith in Jesus as a dear friend and noble teacher whom we love to remember. Now, this is what the greatest radical can also believe. What does Renan say? "Jesus is now a thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, than he was during his short passage through life. He still presides, day by day, over the destinies of the world. He started us on a new direction, and in that direction we are still moving." At the communion table, we are not thinking of any doctrinal question about Christ's nature, but of his pure and holy life, his mighty spiritual influence, his heavenly human love to the sufferers and sinners, his unflinching faith in the goodness of God and the immortality of man. Those who believe nothing else about Jesus believe in this. John Stuart Mill and Jean Jacques Rousseau both believed that this goodness of Jesus surpassed that of any other character in history. There was no reason why they should not come to the supper. Dean Stanley, in one of those noble passages which show the courage of speech which comes from a clear conviction, says, "When Bishop Pearson, in his work on the Creed, vindicates the divinity of Christ without the mention of any of those moral qualities by which he has bowed down the world before him, his grasp on the doctrine is far feebler than that of Rousseau or Mill, who have seized the very attributes which constitute the marrow and essence of his nature."

One of the very advantages belonging to a symbolic

action is that it is not a dogma, and cannot be made one. When I take the bread and the wine, I put my own thought into what I do, not that of any other person. It is not like reciting a creed. Probably each person who comes to the communion means something different by this act from any one else. To one, it means self-surrender, a purpose of obedience; to another, receptive trust, giving one's mind and heart to be fed by God. To one, it is communion by memory and sympathy with Christ and the good of all time; it is sitting at the feet of Jesus, to be taught by him; it is memory of the dear friends who have gone, and are now perhaps near Jesus. To another, it is a eucharist; that is, a feast of gratitude for all the blessed hours of life, and all its hopes. To others, it is a period of self-examination,—a time to bethink ourselves and take a new departure. Bread and wine mean strength and joy,—"wine which maketh glad the heart of man, and bread which strengthens man's heart." Bread and wine may mean all these things and a great many more. Our purpose at the communion table is not to express any opinion about Christ, but to come near to Christ himself in trust and love.

There is another advantage in this service,—that it is the only act of worship in which every one is his own minister. Each one who takes the bread and wine is his own priest, officiating at the altar in his own soul. He is doing identically the same thing which the early inhabitants of the world performed by their unbloody sacrifice of the fruits of the earth. Jesus, by his own death, put an end to all the blood-

shed which had polluted the ground by the death of so many innocent victims. In that hour, the highest form of religion known to man dropped all animal sacrifices; and Jesus, by his own death, put an end to the idea that God could be propitiated by the death of any of his creatures. The meat of the Paschal Lamb was on the table, but Jesus passed that by. That lamb was the essential part of the Passover; but Jesus only took the fruits of the earth, the bread and wine. The result was that no animal sacrifice was imported from Judaism or Paganism into Christianity. The blood of no victims has ever smoked on the innocent altars of our faith. One of the early religions of the world has shared this merit. The worship of Buddha has never demanded or received animal sacrifices.

"This bread is henceforth to be my body, this wine is the blood of the new covenant." When we take the bread and wine, we go back through long centuries to the early days when the simple cultivator, in offering the fruits of the earth to God, expressed his trust, obedience, and love. Each one of us, in the solitude of his heart, offers the sacrifice of the soul to his heavenly Father.

But the chief reason why serious men and women do not come to the communion is that they do not see any meaning in it for them, any value for them. They say: "We can see its meaning for the Roman Catholics, who believe that they are receiving God through their lips into their souls. We can see its meaning for Trinitarians, who believe they are commemorating the death of an atoning God. But

what meaning has it for Unitarians, to whom Christ is a brother man, made in all things as we are, to whose life and death we attach no mystery, save the mysterious beauty of perfect human goodness?"

I wish to meet this question fairly. Unless this ordinance has a real meaning, carries real good, we do not wish it to survive. We do not wish to continue it merely as a time-honored usage.

If we should ask those who love to attend the service, "What good does it do to you?" I think they might reply thus: "We value it as the one service which connects us personally with Christ, and unites us with the body of his disciples in all lands and times. In this act, we join with the Universal Church, and become one with all believers. We are one with Catholics, Protestants, and Greeks,— orthodox and heterodox. We are sitting with them all at the feet of Jesus. In this quiet hour, the noise of disputes is silent. Through long centuries of time, Jesus holds out his hand to each of us. He becomes a present Saviour, a living Master. We belong to his fold, and know that he belongs to us, that he loves us, and that we are of the sheep who know his voice."

"We value it also as a period, returning at regular intervals, which calls us to reflect, to return to ourselves, to consider where we are and what is the tendency of our lives. In the silent moments of the Communion Service, we collect ourselves and take a new departure in life. We are so apt to drift with the current, to let ourselves go where fashion, habit, circumstances, impel us, that we are glad sometimes to stand still and consider. Then we find which way we

are going, and whether in anything we are going wrong. Every day at noon, the captain of a vessel at sea takes an observation, to get his position and to learn where he is. In the progress of the soul, it is well to take an observation from time to time, and see if we are on the right track. To change the figure, the Communion Service is an anchor for the moral nature, to keep it from drifting unconsciously the wrong way. How many persons have been led to take a new purpose in life, or to hold firmly to their course, by the simple habit of attendance on such a service! How many might have been saved by it from a seductive downward career, if they had kept up such a habit!"

It also seems to me as if this service has great meaning to those who believe in Jesus, not as the Man-God, but as the Divine Man. In him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, because in him humanity rose to its highest point, where it is at one with God. He is our living, ever-present brother, at one with God because of his entire filial obedience and love, at one with us by his perfect human universal sympathy. No matter how low down we are, he comes to bring us to God. No matter how weak and foolish and sinful we may be, he feels himself our helper and Saviour. Hope, long dead in our souls, revives, when we thus place ourselves by his side. We talk with him by the way; we meet him, as he asked us to do; we say to him in our hymns,—

"Lord Jesus, come! for here
Our paths through wilds are laid:
We watch as for the dayspring near,
Amid the breaking shade."

There are, perhaps, no hymns which show a more genuine faith in the present love and help of Christ than some of those written by Unitarians.

In our arguments, we say that only God, the Father, is to be addressed in prayer; but, in our hymns, we gladly sing with Doddridge,—

"Jesus, my living head,
I bless thy faithful care,—
My advocate before the throne,
And my forerunner there."

With Bowring, we speak to Jesus, and say,—

"Yes, we will remember thee,
Friend and Saviour; and thy feast
Of all services shall be
Holiest and welcomest."

With Heber, we gladly cry to our friend:—

"Bread of the world, in mercy broken;
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed;
By whom the words of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins are dead,—

"Look on the hearts by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed,
And be thy feast to us the token
That by thy grace our souls are fed."

There is nothing in this which shocks our intelligence. We talk thus with Jesus, as we should have done when he was alive on earth. If we had known him then, we should have said: "Let us be joined in thy name, O Master! Come, Master, come quickly;

for our path is through thorns! Thou art the bread of the world, the wine of our souls! Look on our broken hearts and our falling tears, and feed us with thy grace!" Such words as these to a present, visible friend would not have implied any belief that he was God. Why should they, when he is invisible, if he is still present to us by our convictions? It is still our dear human brother to whom we speak. It is reasonable to believe that he is with us always, even to the end of that age through which his Church is now struggling. Did he cease to care for the triumph of God's truth and love, for the redemption of man from sin and ignorance, when he went up into a higher life? That ascent did not take him away: it brought him nearer to us all. Going into a heaven of love, he does not love his friends here below less: he loves them more. We certainly must believe that this great heart still beats with warmest sympathy for earthly sorrow, that this vast intelligence still labors for human salvation. Jesus has not gone away from us: he has come to us. He himself foresaw this, and said, "I go away, and come to you." In going, he came. The translators of the New Testament have inserted the word "again" in this place, making him say, "I go away, and come *again* to you": whereas, in the Greek, it stands, "I go away, and come to you." The whole doctrine of a future, long-deferred, distant, second coming of Jesus has been built on such mistakes as these. When Jesus seemed to go away from earth, he really came nearer to it; and, as Renan says, he never was so near to us as now. His spirit is permeating all thought. Men do not talk so much *about*

him, but they feel more *with* him. They do not say, "Lord! Lord!" as much as formerly; but they have more of the mind and heart of Christ.

It is sometimes proposed, as a good plan, to have the bread and wine stand on the table, to be looked at as a symbol, but not partaken of. My objection to this is that I fear the service would cease soon to be an individual act of each person, which now makes its distinctive worth. It is the outward personal act of taking the bread and wine which, as it were, crystallizes the thoughts into an inward act of self-surrender and trust. The outward action fixes the moment for the inward action. It makes an inward crisis, a turning-point in the soul. I fear that, without this special individual act, the service would become one in which, like so many others, people would come to be talked to and to listen. Now, each one has something to do himself; and the very fact that it is such a little thing to do takes us the more into ourselves, to perform the inward act of self-consecration and inward faith.

I cannot but think it would be a good thing for all those who are serious believers in Christ, and who desire his cause to triumph, to keep in the line of this long tradition. Christianity is not so much a belief as a current of spiritual and moral influence flowing on from age to age. The great religions of the world are all, in the same way, spiritual streams, rivers of moral life, surrounding, enveloping, bearing on successive generations of men. Islam is such a current, Buddhism is such a current. Christianity is the broadest, deepest, purest of all. If we keep ourselves in the stream, we are borne onward by its vitalizing forces.

We can have our own belief, think freely our own thoughts, and yet keep in a sympathy of faith and love with our fellow-men. It may sometimes be necessary to be a come-outer, but it always implies a loss. Let us belong to the Universal Church, the communion of saints. Though it may withdraw from us, we need not withdraw from it. No excommunication can separate us from the body of Christ, unless we excommunicate ourselves.

In this one act of the Lord's Supper, nearly all Christians are at one. This little symbol, established without any formality, has come down to us across the rolling waves of centuries, surviving revolutions and reformations. From Palestine to New England is a long way; from Oriental symbolism to prosaic, unpoetic Puritanism is a wide step. But this Eastern image of bread and wine has come safely down to us, preserved by the memories and affection which cling to the name of Jesus. Let us hold fast to it still. Let us make it whatever it can become. Its form may change again, but the heart of love in it will continue always. The more each of us puts into it, the better it will be for all.

SOME REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN A FUTURE LIFE.

WHY do the vast majority of mankind believe in a future life? Such has been the fact in all times. The long history of the progress of the soul after death was written on Egyptian monuments and papyri forty centuries ago, and the belief in some form of existence hereafter is taught in all religions of mankind to-day. Buddhism, long thought to be an exception to this, is now admitted by the best scholars to be no exception. Socrates, the wisest man of antiquity, believed in immortality, and passed the last day of his life in giving the reasons of that belief to his disciples. Goethe, one of the wisest men in modern times, affirmed immortality as a necessary belief of the human mind; and the most savage and ignorant races, in Africa or the islands of the Pacific, share this belief with Socrates and Goethe. The highest philosophy and the most elementary instincts meet here in a common conviction.

But whence came this universal belief in a hereafter? All is dark beyond the boundary of this world. We get no glimpse into the great Beyond. Not a corner of the veil is lifted. Generation after generation passes through that low portal which we call death, and

not one speaks to us out of the hereafter with any voice which convinces mankind. I know well that there are hundreds of thousands who firmly believe that they have intercourse, daily intercourse, with departed friends. I, for one, do not deny the reality of these experiences. But, granting that the Spiritualists are right, and that they do receive such communications, why is it that the world is not convinced that the dead return to the earth? If a great discovery in physical science is made, like the photograph or the telephone or the spectroscope, it is soon accepted by mankind. Why is not this infinitely greater discovery accepted in the same way? The answer, I think, is, first, that to believe in spiritual communications we must be inwardly disposed to believe in them; for the spiritual presence has not power to overcome a reluctant mind. And, secondly, there is no actual knowledge of the future life communicated. The spectroscope tells us what we did not know before in regard to the chemical constituents of the sun and stars. But I doubt whether the spiritual communications of the past quarter of a century have told us anything of the conditions of the future world which were not already a part of the faith of free and thoughtful minds.

Those who disbelieve in a future life do so because of our ignorance concerning it, and also because we do not understand how the soul can exist when separated from the body. While the body lives, we live. When the body is in a healthy state, the mind acts easily. When the body is diseased, the mind weakens. When the bodily organization can no longer operate, the mind ceases to manifest itself. It appears to come to an

end. The doubters say: "Since all we know of the mind is its action by means of the body, and since the moment the body dies the mind disappears from our knowledge, how can we believe in its continued existence? Are not thought and feeling, then, the outcome of material conditions? Is not the soul the result of the body?"

Let me give a few examples of this agnosticism in regard to a future life. They shall all be taken from the lips of serious thinkers, who believe themselves speaking in the interest of truth, and who have a right to use the expression of the apostle, and say, "We believe, and therefore speak." They honestly deny that we have any adequate reason for believing in a hereafter.

In a discourse delivered December, 1881, Moncure D. Conway thus speaks: "Candor compels us to admit that there is, as yet, no certainty of a future life for the individual consciousness." John Stuart Mill was of the opinion that there was a possibility of a future life, but a total absence of evidence either way. At present, he says, we know that there can be no thought without the help of the brain; and experience would seem to show that, without such cerebral action, no consciousness can exist. And yet Mr. Mill admits it is as easy to imagine a series of mental states without bodily conditions as with them. He grants that our thoughts and feelings may, for aught we know, continue under some other conditions as well as under these.

One of Mr. Mill's commentators, Mr. Morley, thinks that he here concedes far too much to the believers in

immortality. All we know about consciousness is that it is necessarily connected with the normal action of the brain. What right have we, then, to imagine that it can continue without it? When the brain is dissolved by death, why should we believe that consciousness can continue? Professor Clifford, in his essay on "Body and Mind," takes the same view. To him, thought, feeling, will, are the results of molecular movements in the brain. So, too, Chauncey Wright. The life which survives death was, in his view, only the influence which a life leaves behind it to influence other lives.

In all these cases, the argument against immortality is the same. The method of science is assumed to be this: We ought to begin, so it is said, with outward, sensible things as realities, as real causes. Then we must conceive of thought, love, and will as the effects of these causes. One movement in the brain must therefore cause love, another hatred, another will produce an argument, another an effort of the will. But why begin there? Why not begin at the other end of the scale? We ought certainly to begin with what we know best. Now, we are more certain of the existence of our thoughts and feelings than we are of the movements of the brain. We know our mental states immediately and directly: we know the bodily states only indirectly. In short, we know our soul better than we know our body. If one, therefore, is the cause, and the other the effect, why should we not say, if we follow the methods of science, that the mind is the cause of the movements of the brain, of the action of the heart, the whole economy of the bodily activity?

There is the root of the whole matter. Our belief in immortality comes and goes, rises and falls, according as mind or matter seems to us to be the most real. If we look on the soul as the substantial reality, and the body as its temporary companion, then, when death takes the body, it leaves the soul untouched, unchanged. But, if we habitually consider the body as the only substance, and the mind as its manifestation, then it is evident we shall conclude that, when the substance is dissolved, all its manifestations will cease.

This last way of thinking has become common in late times. It was very natural that it should be so. It is only the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other. Formerly, all thought ran to metaphysics, philosophy, theology. The outward world was neglected. Only the soul of man was studied. Innumerable systems arose about the nature of the soul, the laws of spiritual being; vast speculations concerning the origin of things, the essence of God, the freedom of the will, foreknowledge, predestination, the relation of the infinite to the finite. These speculations became more and more subtle, visionary, unsubstantial. Thus, when the mind of man turned back from heaven to earth, from the infinite to the finite, from things unseen and eternal to things seen and temporal, it was found that we lived in an outward world full of wonder and beauty, all governed by unchanging laws, all throbbing with mysterious forces. Nature was seen to be a mighty Sphinx, sitting alone in the desert, ready to tell her mystical story to those who knew how to ask aright. Tired of airy speculation in the skies, man comes down to solid earth. The physical sciences

spring into being. Instead of dogmatizing, man becomes a simple inquirer. He asks, and receives; he seeks, and finds. He asks the earth from whence it came, and the answer is geology. He asks the atoms of their laws, and the reply is chemistry. With his telescope, he patiently watches the movements of the stars; and astronomy enlarges its scope. He applies his microscope to minute forms of life, and biology rewards his tender investigation. In all nature, he meets with unchanging law, order, permanence. What wonder that the result of all these studies in the outward world is to make that seem alone real? The world of soul becomes an illusive vision, that of matter a solid reality. God disappears as a personal friend seen within the soul, and becomes a vast plastic force moving in the outward world. He is no longer the object of prayer; for who can pray to a force or a law? He is no longer the Divine Providence, the Father and Mother who watches over us for our good, but an implacable order to whom it is in vain to appeal. The soul is no longer a monad, a personal unit, a moral substance, but only the result of bodily organization. Therefore, belief in immortality necessarily disappears. We die, and there is the end of us. This infection has invaded philosophy and theology. Even some of our theologians can no longer firmly believe in the miracles of Christ or his resurrection. They think the miracles are the myths of an unscientific and unobserving age, and that the resurrection is an evident impossibility. Thus far, the pendulum of thought has swung from one extreme to the other.

But this is only a transition state. It is due to the

difficulty in all thought of grasping more than one thing at a time. When the object under consideration was mind, then the outward world was neglected and ignored. Now that the object is the outward world, the inward world is in its turn neglected. Such are the revenges of nature.

But, after all, there is nothing so real and so interesting as spirit. Of all wonders, the soul itself is the greatest wonder. The mind which grasps the universe is the mightiest power on earth. The will of man, joined with intelligence, animated by love, has grown up into a majestic mastery of outward nature. Mind has searched the records of the past, unrolled the sacred scroll in which the history of many millions of years is written, and deciphered their rocky hieroglyphics. It has weighed the planets in scales, and analyzed the fiery atmosphere of the sun. It devotes itself with a mighty love to great deeds and vast reforms. It pours itself forth in art, poetry, music. Is not mind the most real thing in nature, that for which nature exists? A single soul, like that of Longfellow, whose tender song has soothed the heart of nations, is a more important factor in the universe of God than a whole train of meteoric planets informed with no such divine life. Who can believe that he has come to an end, because no longer using the bodily instrument with which he was connected? Who can believe that Emerson ceased to be, when some particles in his brain or lungs refused to do their work? Does God create such spirits, educate them by the long developed life of civilization and Christianity, teach them by the great discipline of life, and

then leave their existence at the mercy of a blast of cold air or the influence of a malarial soil? The lower as well as the higher reason of man rebels at such a thought. The lower reason, which we call instinct, has led all primitive races, with scarcely an exception, to believe in the immortality of the soul. The highest development of reason, in such minds as that of Socrates and Plato, has taught the same doctrine. The common sense of mankind and the loftiest flight of the most sublime genius agree in the same conviction. Great intelligences like those of Pascal and Swedenborg, inclining naturally to faith, see the future life as an undoubted reality. The opposite class of speculative thinkers, inclining to criticism and to doubt, like Aristotle, Bacon, and Theodore Parker, hold firmly to the same belief. We may say, then, that the human race as a whole, in spite of the great darkness which hangs over the future, and notwithstanding all the arguments of the keenest scepticism, has universally held to a belief in a future life.

The arguments of unbelief are on the surface, evident to all. They require no science or philosophy to discover them. Every human being who loses a dear friend feels their full force. And yet, in spite of them, the vast majority of men have believed in a hereafter. Is there not, then, an instinct of immortality planted within us? The convictions which are practically universal, and which do not come from outward experience,— which are even opposed to outward experience,— must come from some inward instinct of the soul itself.

"Not at all," answers the doubter. "The wish is

father to the thought. People believe what they like to believe. We are fond of life, and wish to continue to live. But that is no evidence that we shall live."

This answer, however, merely changes the form of our argument. We therefore will put our question in other words, and ask: Why do men wish to live, if it is their nature to die? In other things, our wishes follow the law of our nature. What we are made to do we like to do. Man was made for society, affection, home; and he enjoys them. He was made for work, study, progress; and these give him pleasure. Why, then, as the body decays, does not the wish for immortal life decay, too? If the soul is only the result of the body, just as the movement of the hands of a watch is the result of the machinery within, why is not the decay of the bodily mechanism constantly accompanied with the decay of the spiritual nature? Why do not faith, hope, and love diminish regularly with the wearing away of the physical system? But there is no such correlation. The body reaches its highest development, say, at forty or fifty years: after that, it begins to decline. But the mind goes on accumulating knowledge; the heart becomes larger, purer, more loving; the soul lifts itself to loftier regions of spiritual life. This shows that the soul is not merely a bodily result.

This is eminently apparent in great souls. Schiller, the poet, was not a healthy man: he suffered constantly from disease. Yet his best friend says of him: "If I did not meet him for a week, I found that his mind had made perceptible progress in that interval. And so he went forward, ever forward, for forty-six

years. Then, indeed, he had gone far enough for this world." Think of Dr. Channing, with his feeble body, so weak that a wind might almost blow him away, and yet with an ever advancing soul, which saw more and higher truth every year! If mind is the result of body, how is it that the feeble and decaying bodies produce such vigorous and progressive minds? More than this. The soul, while in the body, is, indeed, often influenced by its bodily conditions. But it has the power of reacting upon them. By force of will, it subdues its bodily weakness, resists pain, and even conquers disease. Men given over to death by their physicians have been known to recover, because they have resolved not to die. If the soul were the mere result of bodily organization, it could not thus react upon it. The soul has been compared to the music which is produced by a flute, a violin, or a music-box. It is the spiritual result, men say, from mechanical machinery. But you cannot imagine the music reacting on the violin or music-box to repair its defects, or force it, when out of order, to produce perfect melody and harmony.

Between the nature of the body and that of the soul there is a mysterious and impassable gulf. We cannot express the one in terms of the other. We are conscious of our soul as one indivisible substance, the personal self. It has no attributes in common with material things. It has no form, no color, no inside and outside, upper part and lower. Hence, in all ages, men have believed in the soul as an individual essence, connected with the body, but not deriving its existence from it. It is the body's guest, dwelling in it for a

time. This is the deep conviction in us all,— that we are not body, but some essence which moves and controls the body.

This consciousness of self, as something apart from matter and above it, has been, no doubt, the ground of man's universal belief in our existence after death. No sensuous philosophy, no doctrine of materialism, no logic, however ingenious, can prevail against this deep-lying conviction. But, in order that this belief should be a practical, living faith in a future life, something more is necessary.

I said just now that, though there has been a very frequent belief that from time to time departed souls have appeared to men, this belief has not had many permanent or practical results. There is one memorable exception to this. The belief of Christians that Jesus was raised from the dead has had a vast influence on the world. It has brought life and immortality to light. It has practically abolished death. Faith in Christ's resurrection has been a working power, a spiritual motor among men. Men, as we have seen, have always believed in a hereafter. But the rising of Jesus intensified this belief into a practical power, such as it never had before. The future life became a reality to the apostles and first believers, lifting them above the fear of death, and has continued to do so in Christendom from century to century. It has not been regarded as an hypothesis or theory, but as a matter of fact.

The event which took place on the first Easter Sunday was the beginning of a moral reform which purified Roman and Greek civilization, and brought heaven down to earth.

It did this in two ways. First, it produced a living faith in God as the Father and Friend of man. Secondly, it created faith in Jesus and his truth as a power to overcome the evils of the world.

Our confidence in our own immortality and in the immortal life of the human race is derived chiefly and depends mainly on our faith in God. The present unbelief in the continued existence of mankind has its chief root in doubt concerning the supremacy of goodness. If, instead of the God of Love, the universal Father, the heavenly Friend to whom Jesus prayed, we have only a dark, inscrutable power, a mighty but blind force, a background of impersonal being, then it follows almost inevitably that we shall doubt and deny the future life. For then we shall say with the Buddhists that "all things rise and fall, come and go, by Nature"; that Nature, by the working of blind laws, develops man out of protoplasm, and that Nature, by equally blind laws, will restore him again to protoplasm. So we fall back on the gloomy creed of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and say that all things revolve in cycles of perpetual change, without meaning and without progress. This view of the universe makes of man an insignificant atom, the sport of blind chance and iron fate. He came without any reason for his coming, he will go without any reason for his going.

The Book of Ecclesiastes paints in colors darker than any that Rembrandt or Salvator ever used this phase of human thought. It was a cry of despair from a heart which was without God in the world. It shows us what a dreary waste life becomes, when we lose our faith in a Divine Providence. Then it is

better to be dead than alive, and better than both never to have been born. A world without God is a world without meaning or purpose,—a world so empty of interest that we should at last not care for anything, and hate life, longing for death, though it come not, and digging for it as for a hidden treasure.

This phase of thought returns occasionally in human history, and most of us at times find ourselves passing through it. Many of us, I suppose, have had hours in which we were without God in the world, when all things seemed to go on by a dead mechanism, when we had lost sight of the infinite tenderness, the perfect providence. A great writer of the last century, who lived much among atheists, being asked if he never doubted the existence of God, replied: "Yes: in my darkness, when I sit alone, in the night, thinking only of my misery and my sin, then I doubt. But in the morning, when the sun rises, when he bathes earth in glory, when a thousand little birds welcome his coming, when ineffable beauty is poured over the clouds, and joy unutterable seems to be falling from the skies, then I come to myself. The shadows leave my soul, and I bless the infinite goodness which fills the universe."

When we believe in God, the Friend of man, the Father of every soul, who has made every soul for himself, to whom we all belong, we cease to doubt our immortality. "Can a mother forget her little child? Yes: she may forget, yet will I not forget thee!" He loves every soul; and, if he loves us, he will not let us go. We are safe in that perfect, infinite love. In ourselves, we are nothing; but, because we belong to him, we are of value.

When the English clergyman who owned the house in which Shakspere lived had it taken down because he was annoyed by visitors, the civilized world cried out against that piece of vandalism. Do we grieve for the destruction of a house in which a great genius has lived, and will our heavenly Father who made us, and educated us, and has given us powers by which we are able to love him and love each other,— will he be willing that all the generations of mankind shall drop out of existence? Not only does his love hold us to himself, but his wisdom, also. Can we conceive of the long processes of creation by which the human race is brought upon the stage of being, and each soul unfolded into capacities of thought and will, ending in their being destroyed as soon as they are made? What a waste of spiritual force, what an inconsequence, what an unreason!

We read in the Old Testament that Jonah was told to prophesy against Nineveh, and say that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed. But Nineveh repented, and the Lord spared it. Then Jonah was angry because his reputation as a prophet was damaged. So he sat down under the shadow of a gourd, and said he had better die, since his prophetic infallibility had become suspected. Then the Lord prepared a worm, which smote the gourd, and it withered; and Jonah was again angry because of the loss of his gourd. And the Lord said: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand

persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?"

The only argument which Jesus uses for immortality is founded on faith in this divine love of the Creator for his creatures. He quotes the words of the Lord to Moses,—"I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,"—and adds, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." When the Lord spoke to Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead some four hundred years. Jesus said that, because God spake of them as his, they must be alive. So, if God thinks of us as his children, his very thought is life-giving and life-preserving. As an argument, this has not much logical force; but it gives us a sight in our souls of the heavenly love, and so takes away the fear of death. And that experience is more than any argument.

When Martha said to Jesus, "I know that my brother will rise again, in the resurrection, at the last day," Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It was as if he said: "Do not think of a future resurrection at the last day. I am the resurrection. The power of spiritual life which I impart to your soul will raise you now above all thought of death. I am the resurrection, because I am the life. He who believes in me, who trusts in my truth, in the divine love which I show to you, even if he were dead in sin and misery, would come up into life; and he who is alive in me, full of my faith, cannot die, cannot have any idea of death, except as a point in the progress of being."

The resurrection of Jesus was not merely a return to this earthly life; for, in that case, it would have had little more significance than the raising of Lazarus. But it was a manifestation of the higher life. The disciples saw their Master ascended, yet the same; risen up to a sphere where pain and sorrow and sin could not touch him, yet the same dear Lord whom they knew and loved. They saw that he loved as before, that they were still his. He had gone up, but not gone away. No matter how high he went in the heavenly world, he was nearer to them than before. So were fulfilled his words, "I go away, and come to you." He went away outwardly to come inwardly. And so he filled them with a sense of their own immortality. If he was in them, and they in him, if he and they were made so perfectly at one, he was their resurrection and their life.

No intelligent student of history, however sceptical he may be concerning Christianity as a supernatural religion, entertains any doubt that Jesus lived as a teacher in Galilee early in the first century; that he taught a religion the substance of which is contained in the Gospels; that he was put to death by the instigation of the priests and by the order of the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate. All this is sufficiently authenticated by writers who had nothing to do with Christianity. The rise of the Christian religion at that period, its rapid development and vast influence on mankind, are also undeniable facts, which are to be accounted for. They can only be reasonably accounted for by the actual life and teaching of that Jesus to whose supreme spiritual majesty the whole early

Church bore continual testimony. Pliny, writing to the Emperor Trajan, a little after the year 100 A.D., describes the multitude of Christians in Bithynia meeting together and singing hymns to Christ, as to a God. The same was true in all parts of the Roman Empire. Within one hundred years from the birth of Jesus, he had great numbers of followers, who went calmly to die as martyrs to their faith in him.

But there is another fact. The doctrine which was everywhere preached concerning Christ — the central and pivotal belief of the Church — was that of the resurrection of Jesus. Whether Jesus rose or did not rise, it is certain that the whole Church believed that he rose from the grave into a higher life. That was the rock on which the Church was built. "If Christ be not risen," says the Apostle Paul, "your faith is vain," — we are false witnesses; the whole of Christianity is a delusion and an error. That Christ's resurrection was the animating principle of Christian belief is evident. This was the one fact regarded as essential to Christianity. In all of Paul's Epistles, he scarcely mentions the miracles of Jesus; he says nothing about his parables, the sermon on the mount, the events of his ministry. But one fact is with him all-important, and that is the fact of the resurrection.

There is something else equally certain. Faith in a risen Master was the source of the courage, energy, enthusiasm, hope, of the early Church. Their Master had not gone down into a cold underworld. He had gone up to God, and was near them still. His arms were open to welcome and receive them when they died. As he had gone up, so they would go up. This

was the "power of his resurrection." It abolished death. It made them sit in heavenly places even then. They lived in sweet communion with the heavenly world while yet here. While doubt in regard to a hereafter darkened the rest of the Roman Empire, the Christians walked in the light of an eternal life.

I know that it is the custom to say that belief in immortality is not necessary to human virtue or human happiness. The highest and noblest virtue, it is declared, does not need the stimulus of future reward and punishment. If there is no hereafter, good men will continue to be good for the sake of goodness. And, if there is no hereafter, men will continue to enjoy this life because of its own interest. The earthly paradise is enough for us, it is said: we need no future paradise.

This is partially true. Goodness may not need future reward and punishment as a motive. But the influence on life which immortality furnishes does not act mainly as the expectation of reward. We are made better, stronger, nobler, by our faith in immortality, because we have around us the mighty influence of the great cloud of witnesses who have gone up. We belong to their world as well as to our own. Is it nothing to know that the spiritual universe above us is not empty, but full of immortal souls, advancing on forever, in sympathy with all that is good here? Is it nothing to believe that the saints and martyrs of all time, the prophets and heroes of every age, are still full of the same powers, still devoted to the same generous activities? Will our lives be the same whether we believe that all the regions of being above man are

full of intelligence, energy, and love, or that they are a vast emptiness, an infinite and inane void?

And as regards human happiness. We know that much of our happiness lies in hope rather than in possession. It is not what we have, but what we look forward to, which makes our satisfaction. It is hope which lightens toil: it is perpetual progress which gives us interest in existence. If we believe all progress stops with the grave, can we take much interest in life? All our work is incomplete, our knowledge insufficient, our virtue rudimentary, our religion elemental. Yet we are forever led by an infinite ideal toward a divine perfection. All is imperfect here, yet the hope of perfection alone satisfies us. Take away this hope, and interest will fade out of life. The intelligence of man demands an infinite end for its scope of action. The heart of man cries out for a perfect love. We lay our dead to rest, and we can have no peace except in the hope of a reunion beyond. Man is made for immortality. Every fibre of his being demands it. And God would not have created us with such necessities, such vast capacities, if they were all to end with the few and sad years of our earthly life.

Therefore, we rejoice, and must always rejoice, in the great hope of immortal being. We rejoice to believe that the highest being this earth has ever seen has shown to us that it is the nature of man to live, and not to die. If anything can be proved by evidence, if any historic fact can be established by human testimony, it is the fact that Jesus appeared to his friends, living, loving, helping them, after his death on the

cross. We have not merely the testimony of the four evangelists, not merely the added testimony of Paul, but we have the very existence of the Church itself to prove the return of Jesus. When Christ died, Christianity died. The resurrection of Christ was the resurrection of Christianity. No mere delusion, no fantastic imagination, could have given those ignorant and cowardly disciples their depth of conviction, faith, courage, their spirit of martyrdom. The whole Church from the beginning has declared its faith in the resurrection of Jesus. Easter Sunday, still a day of triumphant joy, is a perpetual witness to this greatest fact of time. That faith in immortality which poured forth out of Judea, and revived the dying heart of Roman thought, has its only reasonable explanation in this event. The rising of Jesus is the source of comfort to a thousand broken hearts, to fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, friends and lovers. We look up, and see the heavens opened. We see dear and noble friends standing in that divine light, dwelling in the fulness of that heavenly love. As we live from God, as we dwell in things unseen, as we love and hope, the unseen world becomes more near and present. If we look down, we see only the earth. When we look up, we behold the everlasting stars and the city of God. If, then, we would believe in immortality, we must live an immortal life. If we live in the presence of God and immortality, our eyes will be opened to see them. The eternal life then abides in us. We sit then in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. The vast future surrounds and embraces the present, and gives dignity to our finite life. We belong, every one of us,

not only to earth, but to heaven, to a never-ending future, a perpetual progress. "All things are ours, whether God, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come."

Our dear and noble friend, the poet Longfellow, now sees in heaven what he foresaw on earth, that

> "There is no death! What seems so is transition;
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call death."